# THE CLASH OF IDEOLOGIES

## Middle Eastern Politics and American Security

Mark L. Haas

# The Clash of Ideologies

*This page intentionally left blank*

# The Clash of Ideologies

## *Middle Eastern Politics and American Security*

Mark L. Haas

OXFORD
UNIVERSITY PRESS

OXFORD
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Oxford University Press, Inc., publishes works that further
Oxford University's objective of excellence
in research, scholarship, and education.

Oxford New York
Auckland Cape Town Dar es Salaam Hong Kong Karachi
Kuala Lumpur Madrid Melbourne Mexico City Nairobi
New Delhi Shanghai Taipei Toronto

With offices in
Argentina Austria Brazil Chile Czech Republic France Greece
Guatemala Hungary Italy Japan Poland Portugal Singapore
South Korea Switzerland Thailand Turkey Ukraine Vietnam

Copyright © 2012 by Oxford University Press

Published by Oxford University Press, Inc.
198 Madison Avenue, New York, New York 10016

www.oup.com

Oxford is a registered trademark of Oxford University Press

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced,
stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means,
electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise,
without the prior permission of Oxford University Press.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
Haas, Mark L.
The clash of ideologies : Middle Eastern politics and American security / Mark L. Haas.
p. cm.
Includes bibliographical references and index.
ISBN 978-0-19-983842-4 (hbk. : alk. paper) — ISBN 978-0-19-983844-8 (pbk. : alk. paper)
1. Middle East—Foreign relations—United States. 2. United States—Foreign relations—Middle East.
3. Middle East—Foreign relations—United States—Case studies. 4. United States—Foreign relations—
Middle East—Case studies. 5. Ideology—Political aspects—Middle East.
6. Ideology—Political aspects—United States. I. Title.
DS63.2.U5H32 2012
327.56—dc23 2012001122

1 3 5 7 9 8 6 4 2

Printed in the United States of America
on acid-free paper

To my wonderful wife, Margaret Roosevelt Haas,
my best friend, confidant, and soul mate

*This page intentionally left blank*

# CONTENTS

*Acknowledgments* *ix*
*Introduction* *xiii*

1. The Importance of Ideological Distance and Polarity to Foreign Policies *3*

2. Iranian Ideological Factions and International Policies, 1997–2009 *66*

3. Ideologies and the History of the Syrian-Iranian Alliance *124*

4. Ideologies and Turkish Foreign Policies after the Cold War *164*

5. Ideologies and U.S.-Saudi Relations after the Cold War's End *230*

Conclusion *274*

*Index* *289*

*This page intentionally left blank*

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The origins of this book grew out of a mixture of current events and my research interests. I was a postdoctoral fellow at Harvard University when the terrible events of September 11, 2001, occurred. I was at the time completing a book that examined how ideological variables had shaped the great powers' foreign policies at key times from the French Revolution to the end of the Cold War. I found that large ideological differences dividing leaders were a recurrent source of international hostilities. Elites in these instances often assumed the worst about one another's intentions and believed that the other was a subversive threat to domestic stability. In response to these perceived dangers, leaders frequently tried to spread their ideological principles to other countries as a central means of protecting their interests.

The September 11 attacks and the responses to them by the George W. Bush administration related to these findings. President Bush asserted that al Qaeda's hostilities toward the United States—as with other enemy states of America in the Middle East, such as Iran, Iraq, and Syria—were at root a product of profound ideological differences. The most durable way to end these conflicts, according to Bush administration officials, was to spread liberal values and institutions in place of illiberal ones. This thinking played a key role in the decision to invade Iraq in 2003 and the attempt to democratize it.

Although the United States went to war in the Middle East to a great extent based on the belief in the power of ideologies in the region—as a source of both international conflict and conflict resolution—there had been little testing of these beliefs in the international relations literature. The research program known as the "democratic peace thesis"—which asserts that relations among established liberal states tend to be peaceful and relations between liberals and illiberals hostile—seemed to support some of the Bush administration's core claims. The democratic peace literature, though, had rarely been applied to the Islamic world. Were ideological differences the foundation of America's conflicts with many states and

groups in the Middle East? Did liberals and illiberals in Muslim-majority countries advocate very different policies toward the United States, with liberals much more supportive than illiberals? These were the core questions that started me writing this book.

The journey of completing this project has been a fulfilling one, if long and marked with occasional trials. I owe my gratitude to a number of organizations and individuals who provided invaluable assistance along the way. The Earhart Foundation of Ann Arbor, Michigan, with the shepherding of Montgomery Brown, provided me generous financial support that allowed me to take a sabbatical in 2008. Presidential and Philip H. and Betty L. Wimmer Family Foundation Fellowships from Duquesne University were also of great use.

I am particularly indebted to a number of international relations scholars and especially Middle East area studies experts who provided me sage advice, insightful critiques, and overall encouragement that helped improve the book immensely. Colleagues who read all or parts of previous drafts, or spin-off writings that used portions of the argument and evidence from the book, include: Cliff Bob, Steve Brooks, Shahram Chubin, Tim Crawford, Colin Dueck, John Duffield, Ben Fordham, Greg Gause, Heather Gregg, Ray Hinnebusch, Toby Jones, Jeff Legro, David Lesch, Jack Levy, Sean Lynn-Jones, Henry Nau, Robert Olson, John Owen, Binnur Özkeçeci-Taner, Jeremy Pressman, Robert Rabil, Elizabeth Saunders, Amir Stepak, Ömer Taşpinar, Peter Trubowitz, Umut Uzer, Sanam Vakil, Steve Yetiv, and Will Walldorf. For help honing the title of the book, I thank Cliff Bob, Margaret Haas, John Owen, and Will Walldorf. I discussed the book's argument and some of the evidence at the Institute for Global and International Studies, George Washington University. Much of the causal logic had been honed in earlier seminars at the John M. Olin Institute for Strategic Studies and the International Security Program at the Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, both at Harvard University, and the Center for International Studies at Princeton University. I thank my colleagues who participated in all of these events for their insights. Finally, I presented portions of the book at various annual meetings sponsored by the American Political Science and International Studies Associations, and I am grateful for all the feedback I received at these events. One of these papers that advanced an early version of my argument (entitled "Neo-Classical Realism and the Importance of 'Ideological Consensus' in International Relations") won the Best Paper Award from the American Political Science Association's Foreign Policy Division for the 2006 conference held in Philadelphia.

Portions of Chapter 2 were published as "Ideology and Iran's American Policies, 1997–2008," in *The Middle East and the United States: History,*

*Politics, and Ideologies*, 5th edition (Boulder: Westview Press, 2012), pp. 434–455, which is a volume that I coedited with David Lesch. I remain grateful to David for inviting me to participate in this project. The experience, among many other benefits, helped deepen my knowledge of the Middle East and America's relations with the region.

I also thank the anonymous reviewers for Oxford University Press who read the manuscript. Their critiques were extremely useful. I am particularly grateful to David McBride at the press for his encouragement, sound advice, and flexibility, including his commissioning of five different reviewers with different areas of expertise of the Middle East to help make the book the best it could be.

As always, my deepest gratitude for the best things in my life goes to my family. I have been blessed with a large extended family, all of whom have enriched my life. A few individuals, though, need special recognition. I thank my Aunt Trudy and Uncle John for their great love throughout my entire life and for always taking a keen interest in my work; my brother, Kurt, for his example of achievement and integrity, as well as numerous spirited political discussions; and my sister-in-law Deedee for her thoughtfulness and sense of humor. I remain grateful to my father, Carl, who died when I was in high school. Dad taught me many valuable life lessons, some through his death, that helped make me a better person, husband, and father. My mother, Lorraine, is and has always been a great support; she is both counselor and friend. My three wonderful children—Katie, Abby, and Will—are the source of my greatest joys, and they help to keep me grounded by constantly reminding me what is most important. Words cannot express how much they have enriched my life. My greatest debt is to my wife, Margaret, and it is to her that I dedicate the book. Without her support, understanding, and sacrifice this book would not have been possible. She is a woman of great talent and love, and I am truly blessed to have her as my spouse.

*This page intentionally left blank*

# INTRODUCTION

This book examines the effects of political ideologies on America's security relations with Muslim-majority countries in the Middle East. This subject is of the highest significance in terms of both policymaking and the development of international relations theory. Events repeatedly demonstrate this to be the case. Although both George W. Bush and Barack Obama early in their presidencies indicated that ideologies would play relatively unimportant roles in their Middle Eastern policies, developments soon pushed both administrations to reverse course. Bush attributed the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks perpetrated by al Qaeda to this group's profound ideological differences with the United States, and he made similar assessments about the root sources of America's enmity with Iraq, Iran, and Syria. These judgments led Bush to make regime change in these states a central component of his foreign policies. The most important—and costly—dimension of this objective was the 2003 decision to invade Iraq and the subsequent efforts to democratize it. To Bush, increased liberalization in the Middle East would significantly improve America's security. The result, as the president explained in his Second Inaugural Address, was that "America's vital interests and our deepest beliefs are now one . . . So it is the policy of the United States to seek and support the growth of democratic movements and institutions in every nation and culture, with the ultimate goal of ending tyranny in our world."

Although Obama's pragmatic foreign policy inclinations ran even deeper than Bush's, he too was pulled in a more ideological direction by Middle Eastern developments. Massive popular protests that swept across much of the Arab world in 2011 resulted in the ouster of three authoritarian leaders, Zine al-Abidine Ben Ali in Tunisia, Hosni Mubarak in Egypt, and Muammar Qaddafi in Libya, and in increased political repression in many others, including Bahrain, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Syria, and Yemen. Obama called for liberalizing reforms—even in America's authoritarian allies—as the best way of ending the protests and ultimately building more stable relations with the United States (the president, for example, ultimately pushed for

Mubarak's resignation even though the Egyptian dictator had been a firm supporter of U.S. interests for thirty years). Obama, like Bush, claimed a synergy between America's ideological and security interests when he laid out his administration's vision for U.S.–Middle Eastern relations in light of the 2011 "Arab Spring": "[W]e must acknowledge that a strategy based solely upon the narrow pursuit of [material] interests . . . will only feed the suspicion [among the peoples of the Middle East] that has festered for years that the United States pursues our interests at their expense . . . [Thus] it will be the policy of the United States to promote reform across the region, and to support transitions to democracy . . . [T]he United States of America was founded on the belief that people should govern themselves. And now we cannot hesitate to stand squarely on the side of those who are reaching for their rights, knowing that their success will bring about a world that is more peaceful, more stable, and more just."[1]

Were these U.S. leaders correct in their assessments of the importance of ideologies in international relations? Are, for example, large ideological differences between states a key source of hostilities? Are attempts to export liberal values and institutions effective strategies of conflict resolution, thereby providing important gains to U.S. security? Will increasing indigenous pressures for democracy in the Islamic world for the most part benefit U.S. interests?

Despite the overwhelming importance of these issues, little consensus exists in either policymaking or academic circles about how or to what extent ideologies affect international relations. Answers to each of the questions posed above are hotly contested among proponents of various theoretical approaches in the international relations literature. Many analysts—led by proponents of the theoretical tradition known as realism—argue that the effects of ideologies in international relations pale in comparison to the effects of power. According to this view, American decision makers should neither believe that Middle Eastern leaders' core security policies are a product of their ideological principles nor dedicate significant resources to attempting to spread liberalism in the region. Other analysts—led by supporters of the "democratic peace thesis" (the proposition that liberal leaders are likely to have peaceful, often cooperative relations with one another and hostile relations with illiberal ones)—reach the opposite conclusions.

This book adds clarity to these critical, and highly controversial, issues and debates. The book's primary purpose is to provide a detailed framework for understanding *how* ideologies matter in international relations, and *which foreign policies* decision makers should implement to make best use of this information to advance their state's security interests. My central

1. "Obama's Mideast Speech," *New York Times*, May 19, 2011.

claim is that leaders' ideological beliefs—which I define by politicians' specific, frequently unique, preferences for ordering the political world—are likely to have profound effects on their perceptions of international threats. Ideologies will tend to shape leaders' understandings of their threat environment in two main ways. The first involves the effects of the degree of ideological differences dividing states' leaders, or what I call "ideological distance." The more dissimilar different decision makers' ideological beliefs, the more likely they are both to mistrust one another's intentions and to view the other as a subversive danger to their domestic power. Conversely, the greater the ideological similarities uniting states' leaders, the more likely they are to see the other as supports to their core international and domestic interests, and therefore as less of a threat.

Policymakers' international relations are also likely to be affected by the number of prominent, distinct ideological groups that are present in a particular system, a variable that I call "ideological polarity." Systems with only two main ideological rivals possess very different dynamics than those with three or more such adversaries. Most importantly, ideological polarity has critical effects on leaders' inclination to form and sustain international alliances. When at least three main ideological groups exist in a particular system, two ideological enemies, despite their ideological differences, may confront powerful ideological incentives to ally: to balance against or defeat a shared ideological foe. In such instances, behavior that on the surface seems to indicate the unimportance of ideologies to international relations—alignment among ideological enemies—in reality is largely based on the international effects of ideologies.

After developing the argument, I test its hypotheses in detailed case studies of the foreign policies of key Muslim-majority countries, primarily since the end of the Cold War: Iran, Saudi Arabia, Syria, and Turkey. These countries' relations with the United States are the primary focus of my analysis. I find that ideologies consistently had major effects on leaders' core international perceptions and policies. Most importantly, ideologies went a long way toward determining leaders' understandings of which states were likely to threaten and which states were likely to support their core domestic and international interests. Ideologies, in short, to a great extent determined leaders' perceptions of likely enemies and allies. I also find that policymakers repeatedly dedicated significant resources to try to spread their ideological principles abroad. By replacing ideological enemies with ideological allies, leaders hoped to substitute security threats with cooperative countries, thereby significantly augmenting their state's safety.

My argument and findings both challenge and refine prominent international relations theories. Demonstrating that ideological calculations were frequently at the heart of leaders' core security policies is particularly

problematic for realist arguments. Although power variables were important to states' foreign policies, leaders frequently viewed the same power distributions as more or less threatening depending on ideological context. Thus members of different ideological groups from the same state at the same time very often advocated vastly different foreign policies, despite the constancy from their perspective of both international power relationships and other states' actions.

The argument also supplements theories, most notably claims from the democratic peace literature, that assert a central role for ideologies in international politics. Both my argument and democratic peace theories predict that liberal leaders will tend to cooperate with one another, whereas relations between liberals and illiberals will tend to be conflictual. Most democratic peace analyses, however, tend not to examine the major ideological differences that frequently exist among different types of illiberals. This is a major omission. Different varieties of illiberal actors (e.g., communists and fascists in Europe in the 1930s or secular authoritarians and Islamic fundamentalists in the Middle East) are likely to be just as hostile to one another as they are toward liberals. My argument based on the effects of ideological distances and polarity allows us to understand these dynamics, which, as we shall see, are particularly important in Middle Eastern politics.

The purposes of this book go beyond advancing theoretical debates in the international relations literature. I also aim to provide policy guidance on key international security issues. These prescriptions are designed to advance America's interests in the Middle East in particular. Two sets of recommendations that flow out of the book's analysis are particularly important. First, because liberalizers in the Middle East tend to be much more sympathetic toward America than illiberals, U.S. leaders confront major security incentives to do what they can to help liberal groups acquire more power. Recognizing that this should be a central objective of U.S. foreign policies, though, says nothing about which means are likely to be the most effective in realizing this goal. I dedicate considerable analysis in Chapter 1 to discussing the conditions under which aggressive or cooperative tactics are most likely to be more useful in helping to empower liberal groups abroad.

Second, although illiberals are likely to view the United States as an enemy largely because of the effects of substantial ideological differences, for the same reasons different types of illiberals (e.g., secular authoritarians and Islamists) are likely to be hostile to one another. This latter dynamic creates an important opportunity for U.S. interests. American leaders should aim to use the effects of ideological differences to help prevent different groups of enemies from coalescing against the United States. Ideologies, in short, can help the United States successfully pursue "divide and

conquer" or "wedge" tactics toward multiple groups of enemies, to the great benefit of American interests.

To what extent and in what ways leaders' ideological beliefs shape their foreign policies are questions at the heart of America's Middle Eastern policies. It is therefore crucial for American security that they be answered correctly. This book examines and tests precisely these critical issues.

*This page intentionally left blank*

# The Clash of Ideologies

*This page intentionally left blank*

CHAPTER 1

# The Importance of Ideological Distance and Polarity to Foreign Policies

How do ideologies shape international relations in general and America's security interests in the Middle East in particular? This chapter provides the theoretical foundation to answer this critical question. Most important in this process is the development of a causal logic that shows how ideologies are likely to systematically shape states' foreign policies. The argument that I develop focuses on three major issues: an examination of how ideologies create various major threats and opportunities for leaders' most important international and domestic interests; an analysis of how ideologies are likely to shape leaders' alliance policies, including (somewhat paradoxically) the conditions under which ideological enemies are most likely to align; and a discussion of various strategies of regime exportation and the conditions under which they are most likely to be successful. After developing general hypotheses, I apply the predictions to contemporary Middle Eastern politics. The chapter also includes analysis of how my argument compares to other prominent international relations theories, and a methodology section that discusses the operationalization of variables, research methods, and case selection criteria.

## THE ARGUMENT

### What Are Ideologies, and How Do They Shape Leaders' Foreign Policies?

There are a number of ways to define ideology, many of which may be equally valid. I define it as leaders' preferences for ordering the political world, both domestically and internationally. Ideologies, in other words,

are the specific, often idiosyncratic, political principles and goals that leaders both value most highly and use to legitimate their claim to rule. Different ideological beliefs constitute the major differences that separate different political parties or groups from one another.[1]

With regards to domestic politics, ideologies reflect the core institutional, economic, and social goals that politicians try to realize in their states. Any number of different social values and institutional objectives can comprise leaders' core domestic-ideological beliefs. Do politicians, for example, advocate for their country the creation or continuation of representative or authoritarian political institutions? Capitalist or socialist economies? Theocratic or secular values? Full rights of citizenship for some or all groups in their state? Prominent ideologies include communism, fascism, liberalism, monarchism, and religious fundamentalism.

In addition to these domestic objectives, ideologies can also possess international dimensions. If specific, usually unique, foreign policy prescriptions are central to groups' raison d'être and preferences for ordering the political world, these positions are ideological in nature. Thus generic, widely shared international goals such as "peace," "power," or "security" would not be part of an ideology as I have defined it. The Nazis' attempts to legitimate their power through the extermination of "inferior" races abroad or Islamists' desire to restore the Caliphate would be.

If leaders base their foreign policies on the international dimension of their legitimating principles, then how ideologies shape international relations is straightforward and obvious. I label the specific behavioral prescriptions that are associated with the international component of particular ideologies "ideological content." Because the international-policy prescriptions of particular ideological beliefs are usually not shared with competing groups, proponents of different ideologies will very often call for different international decisions.

Although ideologies' international dimension, or ideological content, may shape states' foreign policies in important ways, my argument relies on a different causal logic. I examine the effects of the *domestic component* of leaders' ideologies on their foreign policies. My basic argument is that

1. For others who define ideology in this way, see Mark L. Haas, *The Ideological Origins of Great Power Politics, 1789–1989* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005); John M. Owen, *The Clash of Ideas in World Politics: Transnational Networks, States, and Regime Change, 1500–2010* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010); Stephen M. Walt, *Revolution and War* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996). Some leaders' primary political goal may be just the preservation of their own political power, but as long as they are consistent in the institutional means by which they attempt to achieve this goal, they still possess ideological beliefs as I have defined them. Based on the argument that I develop below, a self-serving autocrat in one country is likely to prefer fellow autocrats over liberals abroad because the former will be less of a threat to the continuation of this person's power.

politicians' international relations will largely be a product of how other states' domestic institutions and principles relate to their own. Henceforth, whenever I use the terms "ideologies," "ideological beliefs," and the like, I am referring to the domestic dimensions of leaders' principles.

I choose to analyze the international effects of leaders' domestic-ideological beliefs for two primary reasons. First, very often ideologies' international objectives flow out of domestic policies. The Nazis' racist policies abroad, for example, duplicated actions already taken in Germany. In cases such as these, the domestic component of leaders' ideologies forms the foundation of the international dimension of these beliefs. The former, as a result, should be viewed as analytically prior to the latter.

Second, exploring how and to what extent domestic ideologies affect international relations has high "value added" qualities. It is obvious how the international dimension of leaders' ideological beliefs (e.g., fascists' call for racial domination abroad) could shape foreign policies. It is much less clear, however, how preferences for ordering domestic politics might have major international effects. This study develops a causal logic that explains this relationship.

A primary objective of the book is to determine ideologies' systematic effects on outcomes, meaning those effects that are created independently of the unique principles that define different sets of ideological beliefs. I am trying, in other words, to ascertain in what ways different ideologies incline various groups of leaders to behave in similar manners, regardless of the differences associated with their specific beliefs. By exploring how ideologies systematically affect international relations, my argument can explain key security outcomes across a multitude of ideological relationships with a small number of variables.

I argue that the domestic dimension of leaders' ideologies are likely to affect systematically their international choices in two broad ways. The first involves the *degree of ideological differences dividing leaders* of any two ideological groups, or what I call "ideological distance." Ideological distance, in other words, examines the extent of the similarities and differences of political leaders' ideological beliefs, regardless of the specific principles that define these similarities or differences. According to my analysis, the huge ideological differences separating liberals from fascists, or fascists from communists, or monarchists from liberals, should push all decision makers in these relationships to act in similar ways despite the very different ideologies that define the relationships. The same can be said with regard to the ideological similarities uniting, for example, liberals, fascists, or monarchists with fellow proponents of these beliefs in other countries. Ideological distances impact international relations by shaping policymakers' understandings of the likely threats that others pose to their interests. Most notably, ideological distances affect both leaders' assessments of others' international intentions and their understandings of the threats that others pose to their domestic interests.

The second key way in which ideologies systematically shape leaders' international policies is through the effects of *the number of prominent ideological groups* in any particular system, or what I call "ideological polarity." Just as the incentives created by relative power considerations are different in bipolar and multipolar worlds,[2] the effects of ideologies in international relations—especially on alliance dynamics—vary depending on whether the system is one of "ideological bipolarity" or "ideological multipolarity." I am aware of no other study that systematically examines the effects of the number of ideological groups on leaders' security policies. Because the contemporary Middle East is divided into multiple ideological groupings—including liberals, Islamic fundamentalists, and secular authoritarians—this omission is a particularly glaring one for analyses of this region.

Notice that the two key causal variables of my argument—ideological distance and polarity—are analogous to the two main variables that systematically shape outcomes in structural realist theories: relative power distributions and the number of great powers in a system (power polarity).[3] This parallel increases our confidence that this book's argument is indeed isolating ideologies' systematic effects.

Leaders' ideological identities are likely to be most salient to their perceptions and policies during periods that John Owen labels ones of high "ideological polarization," which he defines as the "progressive segregation of a population into two or more [ideological] sets, each of which cooperates internally and excludes externally."[4] Ideological polarization is most likely to occur when elites in various countries are dedicated to different ideological beliefs (i.e., there is not general agreement across states that one particular set of ideological principles is clearly superior to others), and when either states are vulnerable to regime change or war occurs that makes such domestic change more likely. The Middle East today clearly meets at least the first two of these criteria. We should therefore expect these leaders' ideological identities to be highly salient to their international relations.

In the following sections, I detail the effects of both ideological distance and ideological polarity on leaders' perceptions of threat and consequent international-security policies. Included in this analysis are the hypotheses that I test in the empirical chapters.

This book's argument and findings are a major extension of some of my previous scholarship. Elsewhere I show how ideological distances have affected great powers' perceptions of threat and subsequent policies at critical

2. See John J. Mearsheimer, "Back to the Future: Instability in Europe after the Cold War," *International Security*, Vol. 15, No. 1 (Summer 1990), pp. 13–18.

3. See Kenneth Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1979), chs. 6–8.

4. Owen, *Clash of Ideas in World Politics*, p. 40.

times from the French Revolution to the end of the Cold War.[5] This book extends this work by adding a new variable to the causal logic (ideological polarity); exploring the parameters of a key, but underanalyzed, outcome, the conditions under which ideological enemies are likely to ally; analyzing a central international-policy implication of ideological variables, the conditions under which different strategies of ideological exportation are likely to be most and least successful; and testing the argument in more contemporary cases that have affected U.S. security in critical ways. The results of the study will provide new insights for how American leaders can protect and advance U.S. interests in the Middle East.

Although some of the examples I use in this chapter to develop these points are drawn from previous scholarship, most are new, and many are not from the Middle East. This choice has methodological advantages. The evidence that I use to derive and illustrate the argument in this chapter is not the same as that which I use in the empirical chapters to test the theory.

### *Ideological Distance and Assessments of Others' Intentions*

The most powerful way in which ideological distances shape leaders' perceptions of threat and consequent foreign policies is by affecting their understandings of other groups' international objectives.[6] The greater the ideological differences dividing decision makers, the more likely they are to assume the worst about one another's intentions. Ideological enemies believe that conflict between them is in the long run inevitable. Even if ideological rivals in the present exhibit no hostility toward one another—or are even currently cooperating with each other—leaders will often assume that such amicability is temporary, and is bound to be replaced eventually with overt animosity. Soviet leader Vladimir Lenin, for example, noted that Germany's cooperation with the Soviet Union in the early 1920s did nothing to eliminate the two states' underlying enmity due to ideological differences: "Germany wants revenge [against France and Britain], and we want revolution. For the moment our aims are the same, but when our ways part, they will be our most ferocious and greatest enemies."[7] To Lenin, "international imperialism [i.e., capitalist states] . . . could not, under any circumstances, under any conditions, live side by side with the Soviet Republic . . . In this sphere a conflict is inevitable."[8] These views led Soviet

5. Haas, *The Ideological Origins of Great Power Politics*.
6. See Haas, *The Ideological Origins of Great Power Politics*, pp. 9–12.
7. Quoted in Walt, *Revolution and War*, p. 187, note 191.
8. Quoted in Walt, *Revolution and War*, p. 130.

leaders to try to export communist revolution to Germany in the early 1920s, despite major material incentives to maintain cooperative relations with that state.[9]

As this last example indicates, the foreign policy implications of ideological rivals' presumption of hostility are profound. Assuming enmity, politicians dedicated to opposing ideological beliefs frequently take actions that ensure such a hostile relationship.[10] Ideological rivals' relations are therefore often tragic. Even if no "objective" conflicts of interest exist between them, ideological enemies will frequently feel compelled to adopt hostile policies because of the belief that the other intends them harm. Moreover, even if leaders are made aware that their ideological differences with others may be creating self-fulfilling dynamics, this understanding is unlikely to change their policies. The belief that ideological enemies are inherently untrustworthy and aggressive will make it difficult for decision makers to risk conciliatory policies, despite the awareness of the potentially tragic nature of this choice.

This analysis does not mean that war is inevitable among ideological enemies, or that rival ideological beliefs preclude the existence of important common interests that may, at least for a time, blunt these groups' antagonism. Instead, ideological animosity resulting from substantial ideological distances will strongly predispose leaders to be very suspicious of one another's intentions, which will make hostilities among them likely.

It is possible that so-called "pragmatists" or "realists"—i.e., leaders who claim that ideologies do not affect their threat perceptions or foreign policies—can ascend to power in otherwise ideological enemies, thereby mitigating these groups' hostilities. Policymakers and analysts should not, however, count on this last outcome to end the threats that ideological rivals pose to one another. In the first place, as long as the legitimating principles and institutions of a regime remain unchanged, selection and socialization processes will strongly predispose leaders to see the world not in "realistic" terms but in light of their defining ideology. Thus, long after revolutions take place, policymakers tend to remain committed to the ideological principles that led to the original political change.[11] Islamist ideology therefore remains central to many Iranian policymakers over thirty years

9. Walt, *Revolution and War*, pp. 187–89.

10. On the tendency for ideational variables to create self-fulfilling dynamics, see Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 184–89.

11. This is a central finding of Walt, *Revolution and War*. See also Maximilian Terhalle, "Revolutionary Power and Socialization: Explaining the Persistence of Revolutionary Zeal in Iran's Foreign Policy," *Security Studies*, Vol. 18, No. 3 (July 2009), pp. 557–86.

after the Iranian Revolution in 1979, just as liberalism is key to U.S. leaders well over 200 years after the American Revolution in 1776.

Moreover, in order to minimize the effects of ideologies on two states' relations, pragmatists must govern in both at the same time. If realists dictate policy in only one state of a pair of ideological enemies while the other's foreign policies are a product of their ideological differences, the former will likely eventually feel compelled to reciprocate the other's hostilities despite their preference for more pragmatic relations. Thus, for example, at various times during the Cold War, leaders in both superpowers attempted to purge their relations of the effects of ideologies in favor of realist policies. However, because it was rare for both states to be dedicated to consistently nonideological foreign policies at the same time, leaders' "realistic" choices tended to be relatively short-lived, and the states eventually returned to more ideologically driven international decisions. The U.S. Congress, for example, undermined President Richard Nixon's realist détente policies in 1974 by passing the Jackson-Vanik Amendment, which made Most Favored Nation status with the USSR conditional on greater freedom for Soviet Jews. These actions tended to confirm Soviet conservatives' assertions that the Americans, despite Nixon's détente policies, remained committed to the ideological overthrow of the Soviet regime. The domestic power of this group was, as a result, strengthened.[12] Soviet conservatives' actions, in turn, contributed to the election of Ronald Reagan, whose worldview and policies were much more ideological than Nixon's.

Related dynamics have been at work in U.S.-Iranian relations since the Iranian Revolution in 1979. Gary Sick, an expert on Iranian politics, describes the inability of both states to be willing to adopt more pragmatic relations toward the other at the same time: "Iran and the United States are in a sort of teeter-totter relationship. When one is up, the other is down and vice-versa. We very seldom get a moment when there is an equilibrium of some sort, where you might see some progress" toward improved relations.[13]

Important historical examples of ideological rivals' beliefs that eventual conflict with one another is inevitable, and the consequent adoption of policies that ensure this outcome, are numerous. Such views, for example, were central to the origins of the Second World War. Adolf Hitler of Nazi

12. Michael Bowker and Phil Williams, *Superpower Detente: A Reappraisal* (London: Sage Publications, 1988), p. 194.

13. Quoted in Gary Sick, Trita Parsi, Ray Takeyh, and Barbara Slavin, "Iran's Strategic Concerns and U.S. Interests," *Middle East Policy*, Vol. 15, No. 1 (Spring 2008), p. 10. On the failure of more realist Iranian foreign policies in the early 1990s to improve U.S.-Iranian relations due to the effects of ideology, see Ali M. Ansari, *Confronting Iran: The Failure of American Foreign Policy and the Next Great Crisis in the Middle East* (New York: Basic Books, 2007), pp. 115–47.

Germany repeatedly told the Wehrmacht leaders that the origins, objectives, and means of fighting the unavoidable war with the Soviet Union were rooted in the huge ideological differences between the two powers. Three months before Germany's attack on the Soviet Union, he told his generals that the "struggle [with the USSR] is one of ideologies and racial differences and will have to be conducted with unprecedented, unmerciful, and unrelenting harshness. . . . The commissars are the bearers of ideologies directly opposed to National Socialism. Therefore the commissars will be liquidated."[14] In fact, the "main theme" of Hitler's reasoning for attacking the Soviet Union, according to the Chief of the Armed Forces High Command, Wilhelm Keitel, was to engage "the decisive battle between two ideologies."[15]

Intense suspicions of ideological rivals were also a defining attribute of the Cold War. Former Soviet foreign minister Maxim Litvinov stated in an interview in 1946 that the "root cause" of Soviet-American confrontation was "the ideological conception prevailing here [in the Soviet Union] that conflict between the Communist and capitalist worlds is inevitable."[16] President Dwight Eisenhower similarly asserted in the summer of 1953 that "anyone who doesn't recognize that the great struggle of our time is an ideological one . . . [is] not looking this question squarely in the face." The next year, he said "The central core of the great world problem is the aggressive intent of international communism."[17] This was still the view of America's president over thirty years later. In his memoirs, Jack Matlock, senior director for European and Soviet Affairs on the NSC staff, 1983–86, and the ambassador to the Soviet Union, 1986–91—as well as President Ronald Reagan's closest advisor on the USSR—summed up Reagan's position on this subject: "[Reagan] understood that the Cold War was ultimately about ideology. He saw both the arms race and geopolitical competition as symptoms of an ideological struggle, not its causes . . . [Reagan was convinced] that a more open Soviet Union with an informed and empowered public would not threaten the United States or its neighbors."[18]

As this last quotation indicates, when leaders are dedicated to similar ideological beliefs—thus making the ideological distance dividing them

14. Quoted in William L. Shirer, *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich: A History of Nazi Germany* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1960), p. 830.

15. Quoted in Shirer, *Rise and Fall of the Third Reich*, p. 846.

16. Quoted in Henry L. Roberts, "Maxim Litvinov," in Gordon A. Craig and Felix Gilbert, eds., *The Diplomats, 1919–1939* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1953), p. 366.

17. Quoted in John Lewis Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment: A Critical Appraisal of Postwar American National Security Policy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), p. 139.

18. Jack F. Matlock, *Reagan and Gorbachev: How the Cold War Ended* (New York: Random House, 2004), p. 320.

small—assessments of intentions are often very different than the worst-case assumptions that tend to be made among ideological enemies. Policymakers who share core ideological principles are likely to give one another the benefit of the doubt and interpret one another's actions and statements in a mostly favorable light. Clearly hostile actions can override this presumption of amity, but the evidence of aggressive intent usually has to be clear and substantial before this point is reached.[19]

There have been important exceptions to these claims. At times, ideological similarities can increase rather than diminish threat perceptions. Most notably, perfectionist ideologies that allow for only one interpretation of truth and history or ideologies that call for one leader of a transnational ideological group are likely to result in conflictual relations among otherwise ideological allies. These dynamics help explain the high threat levels that ultimately resulted between communist Russia and China, as well as between the fellow Baathist Syrian and Iraqi regimes.[20]

Although ideological similarities have sometimes been a source of international conflict, this variable has often resulted in significantly reduced threat perceptions and increased cooperation among multiple ideological groups, including liberals, monarchists, fascists, religious fundamentalists, and even communists.[21] For example, although the Sino-Soviet alliance of the 1950s was eventually replaced with enmity, we should not forget the depth of the cooperation between the two communist powers that existed throughout the 1950s. Soviet economic support of China, according to the political economist Hans Heymann, resulted in "the most comprehensive technology transfer in modern industrial history."[22] Soviet military aid was almost as impressive, including to the development of China's nuclear weapons program, which surpassed analogous support from America to its allies. Internal documents reveal that ideological affinity was a key motivating force for this impressive, in some ways unprecedented, aid. Josef Stalin, for

19. The United States, for example, had to threaten and eventually take territories from Mexico and Spain in the 1830s–1840s and 1890s, respectively, before most liberals in these states lost their trust and admiration for America. Before these developments, Mexican and Spanish liberals' positive views of the United States were considerable. See John M. Owen, "Perceptions and the Limits of Liberal Peace: The Mexican-American and Spanish-American Wars," in *Paths to Peace: Is Democracy the Answer?* ed. Miriam Fendius Elman (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1997), pp. 153–89.

20. On ideological similarities as a source of threat, see Haas, *The Ideological Origins of Great Power Politics*, ch. 5; Stephen M. Walt, *The Origins of Alliances* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987), pp. 35–36.

21. See Haas, *The Ideological Origins of Great Power Politics*; Owen, *Clash of Ideas in World Politics.*

22. Hans Heymann, cited in A. Doak Barnett, *China and the Major Powers of East Asia* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 1977), 28.

example, told one of his associates that "if socialism is victorious in China and other countries follow the same road, we can consider the victory of socialism throughout the world to be guaranteed . . . Because of that, we must not spare any effort or resources in assisting the Chinese communists."[23]

Trust, and as a result cooperation, among liberal states has been the most impressive and enduring of any ideological group. No established liberal democracy has ever warred with another. This phenomenon is known in the international relations literature as the "democratic peace." Numerous liberal leaders have expressed high levels of trust about one another's international objectives. In a speech expressing his support for the European Union (EU), President Bill Clinton, for example, claimed that Americans "should develop ourselves to become a part of the group that shares our common [liberal] values . . . Of course, one day the EU will surpass the United States economically. But if we belong to the same group with our common values, who cares!"[24] Britain's Prime Minister Tony Blair reciprocated these sentiments when he indicated that despite America's overwhelming power superiority in the post–Cold War world, liberal states need not fear American primacy. Hence his assertion in a July 2003 speech that "there is no more dangerous theory in international politics today than that we need to balance the power of America with other competitor powers."[25] Every president of the United States in the post–Cold War period (Ronald Reagan, George H. W. Bush, Bill Clinton, George W. Bush, and Barack Obama) has expressed confidence in the accuracy of the predictions of democratic peace theory.

### *Ideological Distance and Threats to Politicians' Domestic Interests*

A second prominent way in which ideological distances are likely to shape leaders' threat perceptions is by affecting their understandings of the dangers and supports to their most important domestic interests, namely the preservation of their political power and the regime type they support. The greater the ideological differences dividing decision makers in different states, the greater their fears of domestic subversion are likely to be. Leaders will tend to worry that the success of ideological enemies abroad will be contagious, ultimately boosting the political fortunes of like-minded

23. Quoted in Sergei N. Goncharov, John W. Lewis, and Xue Litai, *Uncertain Partners: Stalin, Mao, and the Korean War* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993), 31.

24. Quoted in Cengiz Çandar, "The Post–September 11 United States through Turkish Lenses," in Morton Abramowitz, ed., *The United States and Turkey: Allies in Need* (New York: The Century Foundation Press, 2003), pp. 169–70.

25. Quoted in Richard W. Stevenson, "Bush at His Side, Blair is Resolute in War's Defense," *New York Times,* July 18, 2003, p. A1.

individuals at home, even to the point of revolution.[26] Politicians will also tend to assume that international ideological rivals will provide aid to the latter's ideological allies throughout the system in an attempt to promote political change in targeted states. In these ways, international ideological competitions tend to be translated into domestic struggles for power and legitimacy.

The reverse patterns also hold true. Leaders will tend to view the success of ideological allies abroad with approval, since others' victories are likely to benefit the former's domestic interests. By demonstrating the advantages of particular ideological beliefs, a party's success in one state is likely to aid the political fortunes of like-minded groups throughout the system.

Fears of domestic subversion often have critical effects on leaders' international relations. British and French conservative leaders' fears of the spread of communism virtually precluded an alliance with the Soviet Union against Germany in the 1930s, despite the latter's massive rearmament policies and geopolitical expansion. As the scholar Patrice Buffotot explains with regard to the French Army High Command, which was a bastion of conservatism: "[This group] was uneasy about the consequences of a military pact with the USSR. It feared subversive action by the Communist Party, under orders from the Soviet Union, within its own forces . . . The French High Command rejected a military alliance with the Soviet Union . . . [because of] ideological aversion."[27]

In the 1980s, key Chinese policymakers claimed to view the United States as not only a power danger, but a subversive one as well, which resulted in increased tensions between the two countries. This belief was evident in the transcripts of Chinese Politburo discussions during the 1989 protests for political liberalization held in Tiananmen Square. As Deng Xiaoping told his colleagues: "The causes of the [democracy movement] have to do with the global context. The Western world, especially the United States, has thrown its entire propaganda machine into agitation work and has given a lot of encouragement and assistance to the so-called democrats . . . This is the root of the chaotic situation we face today. . . ."[28]

26. The tendency for developments in one country to spur or inspire similar outcomes elsewhere is known as "demonstration effects." On demonstration effects in international relations, especially the fear of ideological subversion, see Haas, *The Ideological Origins of Great Power Politics*, pp. 6–8; Walt, *Revolution and War*, pp. 37–43; Owen, *Clash of Ideas in World Politics*, pp. 38–42.

27. Patrice Buffotot, "The French High Command and the Franco-Soviet Alliance, 1933–1939," *The Journal of Strategic Studies*, Vol. 5, No. 4 (December 1983), pp. 556–57.

28. Quoted in "The Tiananmen Papers," introduced by Andrew Nathan, *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 80, No. 1 (January/February 2001), p. 32; see also pp. 24–25, 31.

In the 2000s, Russia's authoritarian leaders worried that the "color" liberal revolutions in Georgia (rose), Ukraine (orange), and Kyrgyzstan (tulip) would spread to Russia. Vladislav Surkov, the deputy director of the presidential administration and a top advisor to President Vladimir Putin, for example, claimed that these revolutions had "made a strong impression on many [Russian] politicians," and he worried that the spread of these political changes to Russia was a "very real threat."[29] Because Russian policymakers viewed America as an important support behind the spread of democracy in the region, fears for these individuals' domestic interests contributed to increasing tensions with the United States.[30]

Similarly, illiberal leaders from across the world—including those in Iran, Saudi Arabia, and even China—were concerned that the large-scale popular protests that toppled dictators in Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya in 2011 would inspire the same outcomes in their countries. Once again, many of these illiberals blamed American values and policies as a major contributing cause of these revolutionary forces. These views, in turn, resulted in an escalation of threat perceptions and tensions with the United States.[31]

Fears of subversion may be particularly high in the Middle East because many of the countries in the region are not traditional nation-states. Many are highly heterogeneous societies. They are divided into numerous—often large—ethnic, religious, and ideological groups, most of which do not hold political power. This heterogeneity may make leaders feel that they are especially vulnerable to foreign penetration and support for domestic subversion.[32] These vulnerabilities, in turn, heighten elites' fears of ideological rivals' intentions.

Whereas fears of ideological subversion are instrumental to the creation of high threats among ideological enemies, support of one another's domestic interests creates powerful incentives for cooperation among ideological allies. This was the case, for example, in the 1980s for Soviet "New Thinkers,"

29. Quoted in Thomas Ambrosio, "Insulating Russia from a Colour Revolution: How the Kremlin Resists Regional Democratic Trends," *Democratization*, Vol. 14, No. 2 (April 2007), p. 241.

30. Ambrosio, "Insulating Russia from a Colour Revolution," pp. 237–41.

31. On Saudi and Chinese leaders' increased fears of ideological subversion due to events in Tunisia and Egypt in 2011 and resulting increased hostilities with the United States, see David E. Sanger and Eric Schmitt, "U.S.-Saudi Tensions Intensify with Mideast Turmoil," *New York Times*, March 14, 2011; Edward Wong and Jonathan Ansfield, "Beijing Blames Foreigners for Its Fears of Unrest," *New York Times*, May 8, 2011.

32. In the 1980s, for example, leaders of many Middle Eastern states feared that Iran would use the Shiite populations in other states to export its revolution. See Scott Cooper, "State-Centric Balance-of-Threat Theory: Explaining the Misunderstood Gulf Cooperation Council," *Security Studies*, Vol. 13, No. 2 (Winter 2003/4), pp. 306–49.

those members of the Communist Party who rejected orthodox Marxism-Leninism for more liberal ideological principles. These individuals, who explicitly looked to Western Europe, America, and Japan as models for their domestic reforms, believed that cooperation with the Western powers would be an important aid to their goals of domestic liberalization. According to Anatoly Chernyaev (General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev's personal advisor on foreign affairs), in order for New Thinkers to "succeed with a new foreign policy, we had to demolish the myths and dogmas of a confrontational ideology. . . . Our contacts with Western Europe [helped realize this goal of domestic change, while] relations with socialist countries, especially China and Cuba, were holding back de-ideologization."[33]

Authoritarian Russian leaders in the 2000s adopted policies analogous to those of their New Thinker predecessors, though in reverse. As part of their attempts to prevent the spread of liberalism to Russia, they were active in supporting fellow illiberal regimes. Russia, for example, provided generous aid to Belarus for much of the 2000s largely due to a belief that the continuation of the two countries' illiberal political systems was interconnected. As Belarus's authoritarian leader Alyaksandar Lukashenka observed in 2005: "[A] revolution in Belarus is a revolution in Russia." Key Russian politicians clearly sympathized with this position.[34]

The same thinking led Saudi Arabia in 2011 to tighten its alliance with Bahrain in response to the spread of popular protests throughout much of the Arab world in that year. Part of these efforts included sending Saudi troops, at the request of Bahrain's monarch, into its neighbor to quell domestic unrest. Saudi leaders feared that a successful revolution in Bahrain would inspire and embolden similar pressures in their kingdom.[35]

The preceding analysis leads to the first hypothesis that I test in the empirical chapters.

Hypothesis 1: The greater the ideological differences dividing states' leaders, the more likely they are to see one another as threats to both the security of their state and their domestic power. Conversely, the greater the ideological similarities uniting decision makers, the more likely they are to see one another as supports to their international and domestic interests. These relationships will hold because ideological distances shape leaders' assessments of both others' international intentions and the likelihood of domestic subversion.

33. Anatoly S. Chernyaev, *My Six Years with Gorbachev,* trans. and ed. Robert D. English and Elizabeth Tucker (University Park, PA: Penn State University Press, 2000), p. 144.

34. Ambrosio, "Insulating Russia from a Colour Revolution," pp. 241–44; quotation from p. 244.

35. Sanger and Schmitt, "U.S.-Saudi Tensions Intensify with Mideast Turmoil."

## THE EFFECTS OF IDEOLOGICAL DISTANCES AND POLARITY ON ALLIANCES

The impact of ideological distances on leaders' understandings of the threats to their most important interests—the security of their state and the stability of the regime's dominant ideological principles—creates clear incentives for particular foreign policies. I dedicate most of my analysis in this chapter to two of these outcomes: choices of allies, and various strategies of ideological exportation to other countries. This section will discuss the former issue. (For a diagram of the linkages among ideological distances, perceptions of threat, and foreign policies, see Figure 1.1.) Prominent in my analysis is an examination of the conditions under which ideological enemies are likely to ally, and how my argument's other main causal variable—ideological polarity—helps us understand these outcomes. I aim to show how interideological alignments—which are outcomes that seem to support realist predictions—are in reality most likely to occur in particular ideological conditions. Understanding when and why alliances among ideological enemies tend to occur is a major international-security issue. It is crucial to states' interests for leaders to know which countries are likely to oppose or support their own.

Following Stephen Walt, I define an alliance, which I use interchangeably with alignment, as "a formal or informal relationship of security cooperation . . . This definition assumes some level of commitment and an

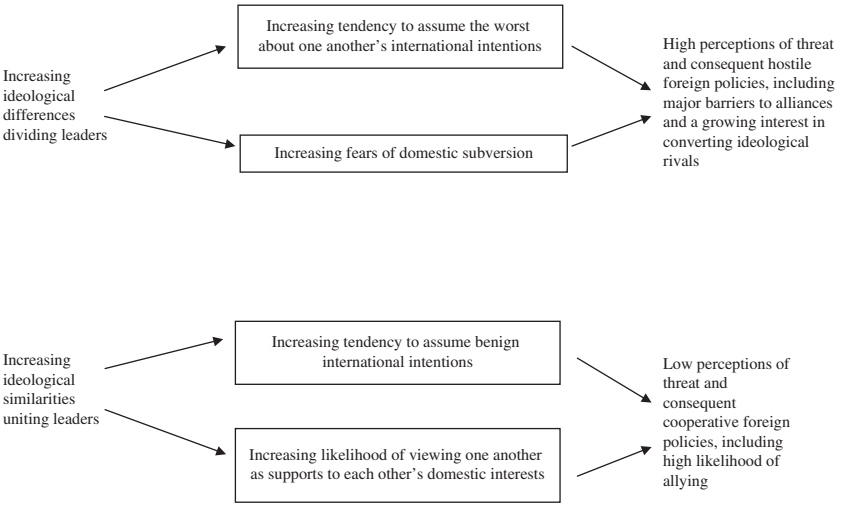

Increasing ideological differences dividing leaders
Increasing tendency to assume the worst about one another's international intentions
Increasing fears of domestic subversion
High perceptions of threat and consequent hostile foreign policies, including major barriers to alliances and a growing interest in converting ideological rivals
Increasing ideological similarities uniting leaders
Increasing tendency to assume benign international intentions
Increasing likelihood of viewing one another as supports to each other's domestic interests
Low perceptions of threat and consequent cooperative foreign policies, including high likelihood of allying

**Figure 1.1** Summary of the Causal Links Among Ideological Distances, Perceptions of Threat, and Foreign Policies.

exchange of benefits for both parties."[36] An alliance thus entails substantial political, economic, and especially military cooperation and coordination of some duration, with the goal of advancing leaders' international and/or domestic interests.

The literature on the origins of alliances points to four major common sets of interests that incline states to engage in significant, sustained security cooperation: to balance a shared international danger, to advance offensive international goals, to counter a domestic threat, and to advance and protect shared ideological principles. After briefly discussing these positions, I discuss how my argument both challenges and refines their predictions.[37]

The dominant understanding of the origins of alliances in the literature is the "balancing" or "capabilities-aggregation" model. There are two prominent versions of this argument: balance-of-power and balance-of-threat theories. Both are from the realist tradition. They argue that states form alliances in order to combine power capabilities and thereby balance shared dangers to their security. To balance-of-power arguments, states will form alliances against those with the most power, while to balance-of-threat theorists, states will ally against those that constitute the greatest threat, with threat defined in terms of a mixture of aggregate power, offensive capabilities, geographical position, and aggressive intentions.[38]

A second major source of alliances occurs when states share substantial offensive international goals. Mutual ambitions, not fear, form the foundation of these coalitions.[39] Alliances can facilitate the realization of offensive goals in a number of ways. States can ally in order to jointly occupy a third country, as Prussia, Austria, and Russia did in the partitions of Poland in the eighteenth century. Or states can agree to cooperate so that each can have a free hand to aggress against different countries. The German-Italian Alliance

36. Walt, *Origins of Alliances*, p. 1, note 1.

37. There are other sources of alliances, such as aligning to restrain one's partners' foreign policies. See Patricia A. Weitsman, *Dangerous Alliances: Proponents of Peace, Weapons of War* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), and Jeremy Pressman, *Warring Friends: Alliance Restraint in International Politics* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008). The four I list, though, are the most often cited in the literature. In the cases I examined, I found little evidence that restraint was an important factor pushing ideological enemies together, which is a primary focus of my analysis.

38. On balance-of-power theory and alliances, see John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2001), pp. 156–60; on balance-of-threat theory, see Walt, *Origins of Alliances*. If states tend to assess aggressive intentions by ideological differences, there is a synergy between balance-of-threat theory and my argument (I develop this point in a subsequent section in this chapter). Walt, however, explicitly downplays the importance of ideologies to alliance formation. See ibid., pp. 37–40, 139, 143, 182, 184, 185, 198, 200–202, 214, 217.

39. Randall L. Schweller, "Bandwagoning for Profit: Bringing the Revisionist State Back In," *International Security*, Vol. 19, No. 1 (Summer 1994), pp. 72–107.

of 1940 was largely based on this logic; Italy supported Germany's aggression throughout Europe, and Germany supported Italy's goal of turning the Mediterranean Sea into an "Italian lake."

A third cause of alliances is a product of threats to leaders' domestic interests. When politicians confront major domestic challenges to their power, international alliances may help alleviate these threats. An international ally may provide or free up additional resources that leaders can use to defeat their domestic opponents.[40] As explained above, a major cause of the alliance between Russia and Belarus in the 2000s was based on this logic.

The final major cause of alliances in the literature involves the effects of common ideological principles. As Stephen Walt explains, "alignment with similar states may be viewed as a way of defending one's own political principles. After all, if statesmen believe their own system of government is inherently good, then protecting states with similar systems must be considered good as well."[41]

My argument contributes to the alliance formation literature in three main ways. First, the causal logic presented in the previous section shows with greater specificity than other analyses how ideological similarities are likely to be a source of alignment beyond the somewhat generic protection and advancement of shared beliefs. Ideological similarities among states' leaders are likely to result in high levels of trust, shared enemies (because threat and enmity are to an important extent a product of ideological distance), and beliefs in the interconnectedness of domestic power. These relationships will create powerful incentives for alliance.

Second, my argument points to major barriers to alliances among ideological enemies. Politicians' mistrust of ideological rivals' intentions coupled with fears of domestic subversion will make these individuals very wary about relying on or associating closely with one another.[42] A number of key historical and contemporary cases demonstrate how difficult it is for

40. Steven R. David, "Explaining Third World Alignment," *World Politics*, Vol. 43, No. 2 (January 1991), pp. 233–56; Michael N. Barnett and Jack S. Levy, "Domestic Sources of Alliances and Alignments: The Case of Egypt, 1962–73," *International Organization*, Vol. 45, No. 3 (Summer 1991), pp. 369–95.

41. Walt, *Origins of Alliances*, p. 34; John M. Owen, "When Do Ideologies Produce Alliances? The Holy Roman Empire, 1517–55," *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 49, No. 1 (March 2005), pp. 73–99.

42. My argument thus explains key findings of various quantitative studies. A number of these analyses have found that states dedicated to similar ideological principles tend to ally, and by implication that alliances among ideological enemies are, statistically speaking, relatively rare. See Suzanne Werner and Douglas Lemke, "Opposites Do Not Attract: The Impact of Domestic Institutions, Power, and Prior Commitments on Alignment Choices," *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 41, No. 3 (September 1997), pp. 529–46; Mark Peceny, Caroline C. Beer, and Shannon Sanchez-Terry, "Dictatorial Peace?" *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 96, No. 1 (March 2002), pp. 15–26.

ideological enemies to overcome the impediments to alignment created by their ideological differences. In the late nineteenth century, for example, ideological enmity between liberal French and autocratic Russian leaders played a major role in delaying an alliance between these states despite strong incentives to align against Germany. As the French chargé d'affaires in St. Petersburg explained in 1886: "The national aspirations of Russia, and the obstacles presented to their realization by the two neighboring empires [Germany and Austria], should logically lead any [Russian] Emperor . . . to seek an alliance with France. Unfortunately, [Alexander III's] . . . hatred of radicalism is such that it rivets him . . . to Germany . . . [Allying with] a France governed by a party the doctrines of which are in total conflict with everything that forms, in his eyes, the very foundation of an organized society" is anathema to the tsar.[43]

The ideological obstacles to an alliance among Britain, France, and the Soviet Union against Germany were even stronger in the 1930s. France never allied with the Soviet Union, and Britain only in 1941, after Germany had attacked both states. Until that year, Germany's massive rearmament efforts and likely aggressive intentions were not sufficient to overwhelm liberal and communist leaders' mutual mistrust and animosity, largely created by their rival ideological beliefs.[44] French Prime Minister Leon Blum in a letter to the French ambassador to the Soviet Union, Robert Coulondre, explicitly referred to the ideological barriers to an alliance with the Soviet Union that blocked cooperation despite significant balancing incentives to forge such a coalition: "A psychosis is being created according to which the Soviet entente leads to Communism; this fear tends to neutralize that which is inspired by the German threat and to paralyze cooperation among the pacific powers at the very time when this current ought to intensify."[45] British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain similarly explained in a private letter to his sister Ida in March 1939 why he continued to oppose an alliance with the USSR even at that late date: "I must confess to the most profound distrust of Russia . . . I distrust her motives which seem to me to have little connection with ideas of liberty and to be concerned only with getting every one else by the ears."[46] Chamberlain in the spring of 1939 even threatened to resign "rather than sign [an] alliance with the Soviet."[47]

43. Quoted in George F. Kennan, *The Decline of Bismarck's European Order: Franco-Russian Relations, 1875–1890* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979), pp. 167–68.

44. See Haas, *The Ideological Origins of Great Power Politics*, ch. 4.

45. Quoted in Nicole Jordan, *The Popular Front and Central Europe: The Dilemmas of French Impotence, 1918–1940* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 228.

46. Quoted in Michael Jabara Carley, *1939: The Alliance that Never Was and the Coming of World War II* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 1999), p. 108; also p. 39.

47. Quoted in Carley, *1939*, p. 142.

The claim that ideological differences create powerful barriers to alliances among ideological enemies does not mean that these impediments are insurmountable. There are numerous examples of coalitions among fierce ideological rivals. Nevertheless, if my argument is correct and ideological differences among states' leaders create significant barriers to cooperation, then the predictions of the alliance-formation literature must be refined. In order to overcome the centrifugal effects created by major ideological differences, very likely either the four main factors described above that incline states to ally must be significantly more powerful, or more of them must be in play than would be necessary for states that do not possess ideological animosity.

Thus, for example, realist balance-of-power and balance-of-threat arguments may be correct that common dangers push ideological enemies together. The level of this threat needed to create such an alliance, however, will likely have to be much greater than would be necessary in different ideological conditions. To put this analysis another way, realist theories of alliance creation may frequently underestimate the level and immediacy of the common threat that must exist before ideological enemies will lay aside their hostilities. According to one prominent realist, even "moderate differences in capability" will frequently create pressures to form alliances.[48] Among ideological enemies, however, the power-threat threshold necessary to overcome the effects of ideological differences on leaders' security policies may often need to be extremely high. In the absence of shared, immediate, and massive geopolitical dangers, ideological enemies' hostilities toward one another may frequently be sufficient to keep them apart, or at least delay alliance formation past the point where we would otherwise expect a coalition to form if realist theories were accurate. Moreover, even if ideological enemies do ally because of shared threats, the centrifugal effects created by their ideological differences may often lead to the dissolution of their cooperation despite the constancy of balancing incentives. Failures or delays in coalition formation or their premature dissolution are potentially very important international relations outcomes that must be understood and taken into account.

Stating that ideological enemies require particularly potent incentives to form an alliance does not mean that it is easy to predict when this threshold will be passed. My goals are instead to emphasize that in most cases ideological enemies will confront powerful barriers to alignment; these incentives will usually require extraordinary circumstances to overcome, and

48. Glenn H. Snyder, "Alliances, Balance, and Stability," *International Organization*, Vol. 45, No. 1 (Winter 1991), p. 124.

leaders will recognize this to be the case;[49] and even when ideological enemies do ally, the fissiparous effects created by ideological differences will continue to be at work, which will make cooperation more shallow and fragile than would be the case in different ideological circumstances.

If none of the four main individual factors that push states to ally is especially intense, a second set of circumstances that is likely to push ideological enemies into an alliance is when more than one of the factors are at work. The existence of only one of these conditions (unless it is extremely powerful) is unlikely to be sufficient to overcome the barriers to alignment created by substantial ideological differences.

The third major contribution of my argument to the alliance-formation literature is to show how my other causal variable—the number of prominent ideologies in a given system, or what I call "ideological polarity"—affects alliance dynamics. Ideological polarity is best conceptualized as an intervening variable that mediates the effects of ideological distances on leaders' threat perceptions, on one hand, and these individuals' foreign policies, on the other. With regards to alliances, specific conditions of ideological polarity are likely to make alignment between ideological rivals more likely than we would expect based on an analysis of the large ideological distances dividing these types of states.

When a state confronts only one ideological rival (e.g., monarchs versus liberals or communists versus liberals)—which is a condition that I label "ideological bipolarity"—it is clear which countries are on which side of the ideological divide and roughly how wide the gap is. In these situations, the alliance incentives created by ideological variables are straightforward. In ideologically bipolar relationships, members of each ideological group are likely to align with one another while eschewing close security ties with ideological enemies.[50]

Many periods, however, are not ones of ideological bipolarity but of multipolarity, which I define as a system divided into three or more prominent ideological groups. The European great powers in the 1930s, for example, were divided into liberal, fascist, and communist states. As discussed in greater detail below, the Middle East today also consists of a

49. During the Second World War, for example, both British Prime Minister Winston Churchill and U.S. President Franklin Roosevelt explicitly compared their alliance with communist Russia to a pact with "the devil" that was made necessary by the extreme threat posed by Nazi Germany. See Evan N. Resnick, "Strange Bedfellows: U.S. Bargaining Behavior with Allies," *International Security*, Vol. 35, No. 3 (Winter 2010/11), p. 147. This article analyzes some of the barriers to stable alignment between ideological enemies.

50. An ideologically bipolar world can be in terms of power relationships either bipolar (e.g., liberal America versus communist Russia during the Cold War) or multipolar (e.g., revolutionary France versus monarchical Britain, Prussia, Austria, and Russia during the 1790s).

multiplicity of rival ideological groups, including liberals, secular authoritarians, and Islamic fundamentalists.

Alliance dynamics are much more complicated in ideologically multipolar than bipolar periods. On the one hand, the overall ideological barriers to alignment are greater in ideological multipolarity than in bipolarity. In ideologically bipolar systems, ideological group A confronts only one set of ideological impediments to alliance. In ideologically multipolar systems, in contrast, ideological group A confronts ideological barriers to align with at least two other groups. Thus, all other things being equal, a shift from ideological bipolarity to multipolarity will make it more difficult for leaders dedicated to particular ideological beliefs to form and sustain alliances.

Although the *overall barriers to alliances* are higher in ideological multipolarity than in bipolarity, the likelihood of *alliances among ideological enemies*, somewhat paradoxically, is greater in ideologically multipolar than bipolar eras. Ideological multipolarity, in other words, helps to create the "extra" incentives discussed above that are frequently necessary for ideological enemies to set aside their differences and align. Although states would in most cases prefer alliances with ideological allies, such states may not be available or sufficiently powerful. Alliances with ideological enemies may be the next best alternative, and ideological multipolarity facilitates the realization of these types of coalitions.

The increased probability of interideological alignment in ideologically multipolar systems is not simply a product of greater opportunities for this type of cooperation in these eras. Instead, there are forces at work for alliances among ideological rivals that are systematically stronger during periods of ideological multipolarity than bipolarity. In ideologically multipolar systems, leaders of different ideological groups are more likely to possess important common interests that increase the chances of sustained security cooperation. Most notably, leaders of ideological groups A and B, despite their major differences, can agree that ideological group C is an enemy. This shared interest may push A and B into an alliance based on the logic that the ideological enemy of my ideological enemy is my friend. In these instances, ideologies are still an important determinant of leaders' international policies, even if these policymakers are (temporarily) cooperating with an ideological enemy. One set of ideological relationships—mutual enmity toward a third ideological group—simply overrides other ideological hostilities. Without the existence of a third ideological rival in the system, however, alignment between the other ideological enemies would be unlikely or more tenuous. Interideological alignment thus does not necessarily confirm the superiority of realist explanations of alliance formation even though this behavior may look "realist" (realists, however, frequently make this claim). Not only are alliances among ideological enemies relatively rare

and frequently fragile because of the continued centrifugal effects of ideological differences, but these types of coalitions, paradoxically, may be most likely to occur under particular *ideological* circumstances.

To express the preceding points in a different manner, ideological enemies are less likely to ally in ideologically bipolar than multipolar relationships because these types of coalitions must overcome in ideological bipolarity two different sets of ideological incentives: the barriers to alliances caused by ideological differences *and* the incentives to cooperate caused by ideological similarities. In ideologically bipolar worlds, an alliance among ideological enemies will be directed against an ideological ally of one of the coalition's members. Thus Tsar Alexander III of Russia was long staunchly opposed to an alliance with liberal France against monarchical Germany not only because he was loath to associate too closely with an ideological enemy but because he did not want to betray an ideological ally.[51] Analogous beliefs led many powerful Chinese communists in the 1960s to oppose aligning with the United States against the Soviet Union. Only after major purges of Chinese leaders was Mao Zedong able to achieve this outcome.[52]

In ideologically multipolar systems, in contrast, alliances among ideological enemies are not necessarily directed against an ideological ally. These coalitions can instead be directed against a third (and thus shared) ideological rival. Because alliances among ideological enemies in ideologically multipolar worlds have to set aside only the barriers to alignment caused by major ideological differences and not the incentives to cooperate that exist among ideological allies, these types of coalitions will be easier to achieve in ideologically multipolar than in bipolar systems.

The condition of ideological multipolarity can make the incentives for alignment among ideological enemies particularly robust for three of the four dominant reasons for alliances that I discussed above: to advance offensive goals, to counter a domestic threat, and to protect shared ideological beliefs.[53] When, for example, two ideological enemies possess expansionary international objectives, an alliance between them is facilitated in

51. Weitsman, *Dangerous Alliances*, pp. 57, 60–61. Only one of two ideological enemies that ally in an ideologically bipolar system need betray an ideological ally in this relationship. One of these states will be allying with one ideological enemy to defeat another ideological rival, which makes the barriers to alignment lower for this country. Thus it was easier for Republican France in the 1890s to ally with authoritarian Russia against authoritarian Germany than it was for Russia to ally with an ideological enemy (France) against an ideological ally (Germany).

52. Haas, *The Ideological Origins of Great Power Politics*, pp. 172–75.

53. When ideological enemies ally due to realist balancing logic, they are doing so despite their ideological differences. For the other three main sources of alliance, however, ideologies can be *a source* of alignment in ideologically multipolar systems by giving states, despite their ideological differences, a shared ideological enemy.

ideologically multipolar eras because they can direct their aggression against a third ideological group. Perhaps the most notable instance of an alliance among otherwise fierce ideological enemies who combined against a third ideological group to realize large-scale offensive goals is the Nazi-Soviet Pact of 1939. Hitler desired the pact in order to avoid having to fight a two-front war while Germany attacked France and Britain. Stalin agreed to the alignment because it not only offered to the Soviet Union control over much of Eastern Europe but increased the likelihood that the Western democracies and Nazi Germany would weaken each other in a war of attrition while the Soviet Union remained on the sidelines. If the latter occurred, the Soviet Union's relative power would increase substantially.

Major offensive goals against a shared ideological enemy were also an important (though not the only) force behind the alliance between the secular-authoritarian Syrian and theocratic Iranian regimes, as we shall see in chapter 3. Syrian leaders hoped that the alliance would help to bring about a change in the existing territorial and power status quo both by pressuring Israel to relinquish control of the Golan Heights back to Syria and by increasing Syrian influence in Lebanon at Israel's expense. Iranian politicians viewed the alliance as a key means of increasing their state's influence in the Middle East, most notably by allowing them to demonstrate their revolutionary credentials by helping to roll back Israel's power in Lebanon and the occupied Palestinian territories.

Ideological multipolarity may also facilitate alliances among ideological enemies for domestic calculations. When state leaders who belong to ideological group A are losing domestic power to ideological group B, international alliances with ideological enemies in ideologically multipolar systems may in some cases help to preserve A's domestic position. Specifically, when state leaders who belong to ideological group A are losing domestic power in relation to ideological group B, they may choose to align with foreign representatives of ideological group C as a means of hindering B's advances at home. By aligning with C abroad, A's leaders hope to combine resources with C in order to damage B's power throughout the system. Although ideological group A would in most cases prefer alliances with fellow believers in order to counter the threat posed by B, aligning with a shared enemy of B is the next best option. Ideological multipolarity creates this opportunity.

British and French socialists' alignment policies in the 1930s provide an example of this dynamic. Many of these politicians wanted to ally with the USSR to contain not only the power threat posed by Germany but the subversive danger posed by fascism. If fascism was not defeated, many British Labourites were worried that "things which were daily events in Germany

could happen in any civilized country," including Britain.[54] An alliance with the Soviet Union would help reduce this domestic threat.

Related dynamics have existed in the Islamic world since the end of the Cold War. Secular authoritarians—such as Hafiz and Bashar al-Asad of Syria—faced in these years two sets of ideological threats to their domestic power: Islamism and liberalism. Given this double danger, these rulers confronted incentives to increase cooperation with international proponents of the weaker of these two domestic threats in order to better defeat whichever was the stronger during any particular period of time. As the domestic threat from one ideological enemy grew, the incentives to draw closer to another abroad increased. Thus when the domestic danger from Islamist groups became more powerful in Syria after the September 11 terrorist attacks, Syria increased security cooperation with the United States. When liberal groups were emboldened by the 2011 "Arab Spring," Syria tightened its alliance with Iran. I explore these dynamics in the Syrian case in chapter 3.

Finally, ideological multipolarity may create incentives for alliances among ideological enemies for reasons of ideological distance. When three or more ideological rivals confront one another, two may agree that they are ideologically closer to one another than they are to another ideological group. When decision makers in ideological groups A and B agree that they have more in common ideologically with one another than do with ideological group C, A and B may view C as a shared, primary enemy. This belief increases the likelihood that A and B will ally against C for ideological reasons despite their own significant ideological differences. In this situation, leaders are aligning with a lesser ideological threat against a greater one.

Notice that ideological distance plays a role in the effects of ideological polarity. Within the context of ideologically multipolar systems, however, we are examining the impact of *relative* ideological distances (*plural*). The same ideological distance that would likely be a source of threat in a strictly bilateral relationship becomes a source of cooperation once an even more divergent ideological group is added into leaders' calculations. In this case, the original ideological distance did not change, just the context in which it existed.

Relative ideological distances have frequently been an important source of alignment among ideological rivals. In the 1930s, British and French socialists believed that they had much more in common ideologically with the Soviet Union than with fascist regimes. This belief played an important role in inclining Western socialists, unlike British and French conservatives, to push throughout the decade for an alliance with the USSR against Germany while

54. John F. Naylor, *Labour's International Policy: The Labour Party in the 1930s* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1969), p. 48.

opposing close cooperation with Italy.[55] Analogous considerations played a central part in the creation of the Syrian-Iranian alliance in the early 1980s, as we shall see in chapter 3.[56]

The preceding analysis provides a framework for understanding when ideological rivals are most likely to ally. Because large ideological differences create powerful disincentives to security cooperation, policymakers should anticipate alliances among ideological enemies only when particularly strong and/or multiple forces are pushing these states together, as is the case, for example, when leaders face a very powerful and particularly aggressive adversary (balancing incentives for alliance), possess large-scale revisionist objectives (offensive incentives for alliance), confront a revolutionary threat at home (domestic incentives for alliance), or share an ideological enemy with an otherwise ideological rival (ideological distance incentives for alliance). Because, as has been explained, many of these incentives for alignment are likely to be particularly strong during periods of ideological multipolarity, leaders should be more sensitive to the likelihood of alliances among ideological enemies in these systems than in periods of ideological bipolarity.

This analysis is very important for both policy prediction and prescription. Leaders frequently base major security policies on estimations of the probability of interideological alignment.[57] Both underestimating and overestimating the likelihood of these types of coalitions can have major negative effects on states' interests. The argument developed above helps decision makers avoid both these costly mistakes.

In addition to helping leaders ascertain the level of security threats confronting their country, the preceding analysis also provides insights into how policymakers can take advantage of the centrifugal effects created by other states' ideological differences. The United States, for example, has had a long-standing interest in weakening the Syrian-Iranian alliance. The dynamics of alliances among ideological rivals have created opportunities for U.S.

55. On these points, see Haas, *The Ideological Origins of Great Power Politics*, ch. 4.

56. Consistent with previous claims, multiple and/or extremely strong incentives for alliance were necessary in these cases in order for leaders to advocate aligning with ideological enemies. British and French socialists in the 1930s wanted to ally with the USSR against Germany for both balancing and ideological-distance reasons: to contain a greater power and ideological threat. (In contrast, because Western conservatives confronted only the first of these incentives, most of these politicians consistently opposed an alliance with the Soviet Union throughout the 1930s; see Haas, *The Ideological Origins of Great Power Politics*, ch. 4.) As we shall see in chapter 3, both Syrian and Iranian leaders after 1980 confronted at least three sets of incentives to ally: balancing, offensive, and ideological distance.

57. A recent prominent example of this tendency was George W. Bush administration officials' estimations that an alliance between the secular Iraqi regime under Saddam Hussein and Islamist al Qaeda was likely. This belief played an important role in pushing the United States to invade Iraq in 2003. See David Johnston, "Threats and Responses: Top U.S. Officials Press Case Linking Iraq to Al Qaeda," *New York Times*, February 12, 2003.

leaders to achieve this goal (though they have in key instances not taken advantage of these openings, as we shall see). When the Americans were able to weaken some of the forces that have pushed Syria and Iran together, the effects of ideological differences tended to rise to the forefront of Syrian and Iranian security policies, thereby undermining the coalition. I explore this logic in greater detail below, as well as in chapter 3.

This section's analysis generates the second hypothesis that I test in the empirical chapters.

Hypothesis 2: Ideological variables are likely to play a central role in leaders' alliance policies. Specifically, ideological similarities among leaders will often create strong incentives for alignment, whereas significant ideological differences will create major impediments to alliance. These barriers are likely to be overcome only when any one of the four major sources of alliance are extremely strong, or when there are a number of these factors in existence. These conditions are more likely to obtain in ideologically multipolar than in bipolar systems.

## SECURITY THREATS AND OPPORTUNITIES IN IDEOLOGICALLY MULTIPOLAR SYSTEMS

Although ideological multipolarity, as explained above, creates conditions that help push ideological enemies into alliances, the overall barriers to alignment in these systems will be higher than in ideologically bipolar eras. The greater the number of ideological enemies in a system, the greater the number of ideological obstacles to alignment. An ideologically bipolar world has only one set of ideological impediments; these progressively increase with each new ideological rival that is added.

The more numerous ideological obstacles to alignment that exist during periods of ideological multipolarity create dynamics that both parallel and significantly amplify the balancing pathologies that realists claim plague all multipolar systems measured in terms of power alone. Realists assert that the balancing process is much less effective in multipolar than bipolar worlds. This tendency results in much greater system instability in multipolar than bipolar eras. In bipolar systems, leaders of each of the two main states know that the other is the primary danger to their interests, and that only their country possesses the capabilities to contain this threat. The result is an efficient balancing process. As Kenneth Waltz expresses this point: "Self-dependence of parties, clarity of dangers, certainty about who has to face them: These are the characteristics of great-power politics in a bipolar world."[58]

In multipolar systems, in contrast, leaders of each of the key states recognize that there are other countries that are capable of balancing emerging

58. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, pp. 171–72.

threats. In this situation, different states' policymakers will be tempted to "free ride" on the balancing efforts of others. Each will hope that others assume the costs of balancing while the former enjoy the benefits. Because all states will be tempted to adopt free riding policies in multipolar worlds, the result will be "underbalancing" against dangers, which will make crises and war likely.[59] Once again according to Waltz: "Uncertainties about who threatens whom, about who will oppose whom, and about who will gain or lose from the actions of other states accelerate as the number of states increases."[60]

*Ideological* multipolarity will greatly exacerbate these last pathologies. If ideological differences among states create major impediments to alliances, then the more of these barriers that exist in a given system, the more difficult it will be for countries to coalesce against a common threat. Thus the overall balancing process should be much less efficient in ideologically multipolar than in bipolar worlds.

Although the balancing pathologies and thus the potential dangers to states' interests in ideological multipolarity are considerable, there are important potential benefits as well. If leaders are interested in creating a balancing coalition against a threat, the barriers to alliances that exist in ideologically multipolar systems are a major hindrance to this goal. When, however, policymakers are trying to *avoid* a balancing response to their own actions and power, the obstacles to alignment in ideological multipolarity are likely to benefit a state's interests by increasing the likelihood of disunity among its rivals. In other words, when leaders of State A confront more than one enemy, it would be better for A's interests for these countries to be divided into multiple ideological groups in order to decrease the likelihood of alliances among them.[61] The same dynamics that make ideological multipolarity an impediment to effective balancing are likely to advantage those states that are trying to prevent such coalitions from impeding their foreign policies.

Given the barriers to alliances among ideological rivals, leaders are better able to pursue "wedge" strategies toward multiple enemies in ideologically

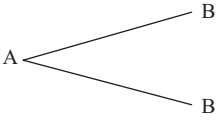
59. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, ch. 8; Thomas Christensen and Jack Snyder, "Chain Gangs and Passed Bucks: Predicting Alliance Patterns in Multipolarity," *International Organization*, Vol. 44, No. 2 (Spring 1990), pp. 140–47. On the phenomenon of "underbalancing" in international relations, see Randall L. Schweller, *Unanswered Threats: Political Constraints on the Balance of Power* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006).

60. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, p. 165.

61. Similar analysis applies when an even more disparate ideological group is added into an ideologically multipolar system. The Soviet Union's Cold War rivalry with the United States, for example, benefited from the 1979 Iranian Revolution. The Iranian Islamists who came to power at this time were ideological enemies of both superpowers. As Ayatollah Khomeini explained, "we are in conflict with international communism to the same extent as we are against the Western exploiters . . . The danger of communist power is not less than that of America" (quoted in Walt, *Revolution and War*, pp. 230–31). These views, however, were an improvement for the USSR relative to the previous situation. Although Tehran remained an enemy of the Soviets after the revolution, the ideological changes brought about by this event resulted in the loss of an American ally.

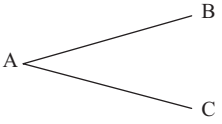
multipolar than in bipolar systems (wedge strategies are attempts to prevent or weaken hostile coalitions).[62] Policymakers can try to use their enemies' ideological differences either to keep the latter from uniting against their own state or to weaken existing coalitions comprised of ideological enemies.[63] Leaders can also try to pit ideological rivals against one another while they attempt to become the arbiter of disputes. By maintaining closer relations with competitors than the latter have with each other, a country's international influence increases. In any of these cases, a state's security is enhanced. (For a diagram that illustrates this analysis, see Figure 1.2.)

**Scenario 1: Ideological Bipolarity**




The most likely security outcome in this scenario is an alliance between both Bs against A. In these instances, it will be difficult for A to adopt successful wedge policies toward the Bs.

**Scenario 2: Ideological Multipolarity**




Interideological alignment in Scenario 2 is more likely than in Scenario 1 (i.e., an alliance between B and C against A in an ideologically multipolar world is more likely than an alliance between one B and A against the other B in Scenario 1). Nevertheless, the probability of an alliance between B and C in Scenario 2 is not as high as an alliance between both Bs in Scenario 1. (The *overall* barriers to alignment, in other words, are higher in ideological multipolarity than in bipolarity). Wedge strategies are thus more likely to be successful in Scenario 2 than 1. A's security will as a result likely be better protected in Scenario 2 than 1.

**Figure 1.2** Ideological Enemies' Ability to Adopt "Wedge" Strategies in Ideological Multipolarity.

62. On wedge strategies, see Timothy W. Crawford, "Preventing Enemy Coalitions: How Wedge Strategies Shape Power Politics," *International Security*, Vol. 35, No. 4 (Spring 2011), pp. 155–89. My analysis adds to Crawford's analysis by showing how and under what conditions ideologies are likely to help weaken enemy alliances.

63. Hitler, for example, in his discussions with British and French officials frequently both highlighted the ideological differences dividing Western states and communist Russia and emphasized his shared commitment to anticommunism with the Western democracies. Hitler's goal was clearly to use the ideological differences between Britain, France, and the Soviet Union to help prevent them from forming an alliance in time to prevent his aggressive goals. See Michael Jabara Carley, "'A Fearful Concatenation of Circumstances': The Anglo-Soviet Rapprochement, 1934–6," *Contemporary European History*, Vol. 5, No 1 (March 1996), pp. 44–45.

## STRATEGIES OF REGIME EXPORTATION

The preceding analysis demonstrated how the effects of both ideological distances and polarity are likely to affect leaders' choices of allies and enemies. This section and the next explore how these variables will tend to push decision makers to engage in another set of international policies: ideological exportation. Ideological distances will create powerful international and domestic incentives for politicians to try to convert ideological rivals to their own legitimating principles. Because leaders tend to believe that hostilities with ideological enemies are in the long run unavoidable and cooperation with ideological allies is likely, they will view regime exportation as a way of reducing the number of enemies in the system and increasing the number of allies. Fears of subversion by the principles of international ideological enemies add domestic incentives to work for the spread of one's principles abroad. Taken together, these beliefs explain why politicians of virtually all ideological beliefs—monarchical, liberal, fascist, communist, and religious fundamentalist—have attempted to export, including by force, their defining ideological principles and institutions.[64] As Stalin explained to a Yugoslav communist leader, Milovan Djilas, in April 1945: "This war is not as in the past; whoever occupies a territory also imposes on it his own social system. Everyone imposes his own system as far as his army can reach. It cannot be otherwise."[65] Stalin, though, was partly wrong in his assessment. Regime exportation was not new to the Second World War, but typical among ideological enemies both before and after this conflict.

During the Wars of the French Revolution, for example, British leaders, in the words of Prime Minister William Pitt, had "no idea of any peace being secure, unless France return[ed] to the monarchical system."[66] Regime change thus remained a high priority for Britain throughout the 1790s. Within weeks of the outbreak of the First World War, British leaders in both private and public statements made the destruction of "Prussian militarism" in Germany a central objective of the war. As Prime Minister H. H. Asquith declared in a November 1914 speech, "We shall never sheathe the sword . . . until the military domination of Prussia [in German politics] is

64. For extensive analysis of regime promotion by multiple ideological groups over the last 500 years, see Owen, *The Clash of Ideas in World Politics.*

65. Quoted in Milovan Djilas, *Conversations with Stalin* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, & World, Inc., 1962), p. 114.

66. William Pitt, "The Folly of a Premature Peace" (speech delivered to Parliament December 30, 1794), in R. Coupland, *The War Speeches of William Pitt* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1915), p. 118.

wholly and finally destroyed."[67] Prominent Soviet officials at various points in the interwar period declared that international peace could "only be guaranteed by the victorious proletarian revolution in all capitalist countries," and that the end of war could result "only when the Soviet system has been adopted by all the countries of the world."[68] Given these views, it is not surprising that efforts to help spread the communist revolution remained a priority to Soviet leaders in these years.[69]

In a 1962 report entitled "Basic National Security Policy," the chairman of the Policy Planning Council at the State Department and a close advisor to President John F. Kennedy, Walt Rostow, asserted that because it was difficult "to envisage the survival of democratic American society as a beleaguered island in a totalitarian sea," it was a preeminent American interest to see rival regimes, including the USSR, "develop along lines broadly consistent with our own concepts of individual liberty and government based on consent."[70] Two decades later, in the 1983 top-secret NSDD [National Security Decision Directive]-75, Reagan officials stated that a critical objective of U.S. foreign policy was "to promote . . . the process of change in the Soviet Union toward a more pluralistic political and economic system in which the power of the privileged ruling elite is gradually reduced. The U.S. recognizes that Soviet aggressiveness has deep roots in the internal system."[71] President George W. Bush made a related argument in his Second Inaugural address: "For as long as whole regions of the world simmer in resentment and tyranny—prone to ideologies that feed hatred and excuse murder—violence will gather . . . and raise a mortal threat . . . We are led . . . to one conclusion: The survival of liberty in our land increasingly depends on the success of liberty in other lands. The best hope for peace in our world is the expansion of freedom in all the world." Exporting liberalism, the president concluded, "is the urgent requirement of our nation's security."

In all these cases, states' key policymakers believed that ideological differences with other countries were the root cause of the dangers to both their international and domestic interests. A logical, almost inevitable, conclusion resulting from these beliefs was that the promotion of leaders' ideologies abroad became a central strategy of international conflict resolution

67. Quoted in "Ministers on the War," *The Times* (London), November 10, 1914. For this and other quotes by European and American leaders (including President Woodrow Wilson) indicating the importance of ideological differences as a central cause of the First World War and ideological exportation as key to conflict resolution, see *The New York Times Current History: The European War*, Vol. 10 (New York: New York Times Company, 1917), pp. 931–932.

68. Quoted in Roberts, "Maxim Litvinov," pp. 346, 348, respectively.

69. Walt, *Revolution and War*, pp. 187–89, 195–96.

70. Quoted in Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment*, p. 203.

71. Quoted in *National Security Directives of the Reagan and Bush Administrations*, ed. Christopher Simpson (Boulder: Westview Press, 1995), 255.

and domestic stability. As we shall see in the empirical chapters, this strategy has been an important component of American, Iranian, Saudi, and Turkish leaders' foreign policies in the Middle East.

Recognizing that ideological enemies confront powerful incentives to export their legitimating principles says nothing, however, about the means by which leaders hope to accomplish this goal. At one end of the spectrum on this subject are what I call "ideological hard-liners." Individuals in this group believe that ideological rivals are so dangerous, and common interests between them so few, that they should adopt virtually unmitigated aggressive actions toward their enemies in order to help provoke a revolution. These policies include economic sanctions, the threat and/or use of force, and little or no diplomatic interaction. On this last issue, ideological hard-liners view diplomacy as either ineffectual, because they possess no common interests with ideological enemies that would create the basis of negotiation, or counterproductive, because talks would legitimate the regime they are trying to overthrow. Ideological hard-liners also tend to accept only full-blown ideological revolution in the target state as a precondition to significantly reduce hostilities. Partial ideological conversion is not sufficient to realize this end. Such aggressive views and policies are common among ideological enemies, from the French revolutionaries for much of the 1790s in relation to the monarchical powers to the hawks in the George W. Bush administration in relation to North Korea, Cuba, Syria, and Iran.

At the other end of the spectrum are individuals whom I label "ideological soft-liners." Like ideological hard-liners, soft-liners believe both that ideological differences are the root cause of states' hostile foreign policies and that ideological conversion of enemies would significantly improve their state's security. Ideological hard- and soft-liners, however, differ in two critical aspects. First, ideological soft-liners tend to rely on more cooperative policies to provoke an ideological change in target states. To soft-liners, diplomatic and economic engagement and the power of example are much more likely to facilitate regime exportation than the aggressive policies advocated by ideological hard-liners. To express this point succinctly, ideological soft-liners rely primarily on "soft power" to help spread their ideological principles abroad, ideological hard-liners on "hard power."[72]

72. On the differences between soft and hard power in international relations, see Joseph S. Nye, Jr., *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics* (New York: PublicAffairs, 2004). For analysis related to my categories of ideological hard- and soft-line strategies, see the discussion of offensive versus defensive liberalism in Benjamin Miller, "Explaining Changes in U.S. Grand Strategy: 9/11, the Rise of Offensive Liberalism, and the War in Iraq," *Security Studies*, Vol. 19, No. 1 (January 2010), pp. 26–65. Miller's analysis, though, concentrates only on the different tactics of ideological exportation (cooperative versus aggressive). He does not examine the centrality of the relative domestic power of ideological reformers in the target regime, as I do below.

The second, and perhaps more important, key difference between ideological hard- and soft-liners is that the latter recommend that leaders be sensitive to ideological divisions within the ruling party of enemy states. To soft-liners, a complete revolution is not a necessary prerequisite for meaningful ideological change; ideological shifts do not have to be all (i.e., a total change of current legitimating principles and institutions) or nothing. Instead, ideological groups frequently divide into "reformers" or "moderates," who advocate important ideological change even while continuing to support key ideological and institutional dimensions of the current regime, and "purists" or "ideological conservatives," who want to preserve the ideological status quo in toto. Ideological soft-liners recommend both paying close attention to these ideological fissures and giving significant support to moderates, such as by adopting more accommodating foreign policies when these groups come to power. Ideological soft-liners recognize that continued provocative policies when moderates govern will only discredit this group's position and aid ideological conservatives.[73]

Because a complete ideological revolution in other states is not a prerequisite for meaningful ideological change, an ideological revolution is also, according to soft-liners, not necessary before relations with ideological enemies improve. Instead, the key to developing less threatening relations is to reduce the ideological differences dividing states' leaders, even if important ideological disagreements remain in place.[74]

U.S. policies in the 1980s toward the Soviet Union illustrate the differences between ideological hard- and soft-liners. By spring 1988, General Secretary of the Communist Party Mikhail Gorbachev and fellow "New Thinkers" had revealed their intentions to implement major ideological and institutional changes in the Soviet Union, including calling for multiple-candidate, secret-ballot elections; establishing a new, popularly elected Congress of People's Deputies that would select a standing legislature (a new "Supreme Soviet") that possessed significant power;

73. To be clear, I am not using the terms "soft-liners" and "moderates/reformers" interchangeably, though they are connected. "Ideological moderates" refers to leaders with particular *domestic* goals. "Ideological soft-liners" refers to leaders with specific *international* strategies for advancing their state's interests. Ideological soft-liners in State A tend to be supportive of ideological moderates in State B.

74. To put this last analysis in terms of the book's argument, ideological soft-liners are more sensitive to the effects of ideological distance on leaders' security policies than are ideological hard-liners. Soft-liners recognize that the ascension of reformers to power in an ideological enemy shrinks the ideological distance dividing the latter from other states. If the argument developed above is correct, this change will tend to result in less threatening relations even without a full-blown revolution.

creating an independent judiciary; and providing protections for freedom of speech, assembly, and the press.[75]

These changes did not mean, however, that the USSR had successfully undergone a liberal revolution at this time. Not only did Gorbachev's commitment to liberalism remain somewhat ambiguous (in 1988, for example, Gorbachev refused to support the deletion of Article Six from the Soviet Constitution, which guaranteed the Communist Party a "leading role" in the USSR), but the ideological and institutional changes listed above were mere proposals to liberalize the Soviet Union; they were not actually implemented at this time.

Many officials in the Reagan administration, including Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger, CIA Director William Casey, White House Communications Director Patrick Buchanan, Assistant Secretary of Defense Richard Perle, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Nuclear Forces and Arms Control Policy Frank Gaffney, and Director of the U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency Kenneth Adelman, refused to recognize the significance of Gorbachev's more liberal policies and intentions, and instead insisted that a complete liberal revolution in the Soviet Union would have to take place before the Cold War could end. Perle, for example, asserted that the Soviet threat to America would only end with a full-blown revolution by "doing away with [Communism] and replacing it with . . . capitalist democracy." "[T]inkering, or even radical surgery, on the existing Marxist-Leninist system" was not sufficient.[76] Buchanan was even more forceful on this issue, stating that "the root cause of the Cold War . . . lies in the character and nature of the Soviet regime itself. . . . [T]he only way to bring true peace . . . is to eliminate the root cause of the century's struggle, the Communist Party of the Soviet Union."[77] These individuals conform to the "ideological hard-line" position as I describe it above.

President Reagan and his closest foreign policy advisors, Secretary of State George Shultz, National Security Advisor Colin Powell, and Ambassador to the USSR Jack Matlock, took a much different position. While these individuals had to be convinced that Gorbachev's commitment to a number of core liberal principles was genuine, in their view the Soviet Union did not have to be an ideological replica of the United States before they believed the Cold War was ending. Gorbachev's public proposals to

75. For details on Gorbachev's proposals for domestic liberalization, see Jack Matlock, Jr., *Autopsy on an Empire* (New York: Random House, 1995), p. 122.

76. Richard Perle, "Helping Gorbachev Discard a Broken Idea," *U.S. News & World Report*, November 20, 1989.

77. Patrick J. Buchanan, *Right from the Beginning* (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1988), pp. 364-365.

liberalize the Soviet Union were sufficient to convince these American policymakers that a major improvement in U.S.-Soviet relations was about to begin. Powell's reaction upon hearing of Gorbachev's liberalizing intentions, for example, was that he now understood that the Soviet leader "was going to change the USSR in ways we never imagined. He was saying, in effect, that he was ending the Cold War. The battle between their ideology and ours was over, and they had lost."[78] Matlock believed that although Gorbachev's proposed liberalizing proposals "stopped short of democracy as we [in the West] would define it," if implemented "the Soviet Union could never again be what it had been in the past."[79] The result, in Matlock's view, was the end of the Cold War.[80] Secretary of State Shultz expressed similar views.[81] Within weeks of learning of Gorbachev's ambitious domestic objectives, President Reagan also declared for the first time that the Cold War was over.[82]

Reagan and his closest advisors, in short, were sensitive to the differences between various ideological factions within Soviet leadership and believed that diminishment of the ideological distance dividing the United States and the USSR would reduce tensions between them even if important ideological differences remained. Reagan's, Shultz's, Matlock's, and Powell's position on this issue conforms to the "ideological soft-line" position as I define it.[83]

The strategies advocated by ideological hard- and soft-liners have different sets of likely costs and benefits, as well as different circumstances under which they are most likely to be successful. The most important set of benefits that hard-line policies create is that they provide the best chance of discrediting ideological conservatives in the enemy state, at least when members of this group are in power. If the leaders of a rival regime possess aggressive international intentions, consistent containment policies by other states will maximize the likelihood of thwarting these goals. Retarding an enemy regime's economic growth is also likely to lower popular support for the state's current rulers. The more international setbacks and

78. Colin L. Powell, with Joseph E. Persico, *My American Journey* (New York: Random House, 1995), p. 375.

79. Matlock, *Autopsy on an Empire*, p. 122.

80. Matlock, *Reagan and Gorbachev*, pp. 312, 315-316.

81. George P. Shultz, *Turmoil and Triumph, My Years as Secretary of State* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1993), pp. 1098, 1131-1132.

82. On the preceding points, see Mark L. Haas, "The United States and the End of the Cold War: Reactions to Shifts in Soviet Power, Policies, or Domestic Politics?" *International Organization,* Vol. 61, No. 1 (Winter 2007), pp. 145–79.

83. Reagan was, however, much more of a hard-liner on the means by which to stimulate ideological change in the Soviet Union, since he favored economic containment and the threat of force to realize this outcome.

domestic unrest ideological conservatives suffer when in power, the more likely that 1) these policymakers will forgo failed radical policies for more pragmatic ones, 2) ideological "reformers" or "moderates" will feel justified and emboldened to challenge conservatives for political leadership, or 3) a full-blown ideological revolution in this state will occur. All of these developments are likely to benefit the state(s) that adopted hard-line policies of containment toward their rivals.[84]

Hard-line policies toward ideological enemies do, however, generate important costs. First, aggressive foreign policies that are explicitly designed to export one's own regime type to ideological enemies will create intense "ideological security dilemmas" for these states. The condition that will significantly enhance the security for one state—regime conversion of the other—obviously makes the latter extremely insecure. Ideological enemies, especially those who adopt hard-line policies toward one another, thus tend to be caught in an even more vicious circle of fear and hostility than discussed above. Ideological differences create substantial feelings of threat and conflicts of interest among states, which in turn create powerful incentives for forcible regime exportation. This objective significantly magnifies the original security fears that created the goal of ideological exportation in the first place.[85]

The second major cost of consistent hard-line policies toward ideological enemies is that aggressive actions like economic strangulation, diplomatic isolation, and military hostilities that are designed to provoke a revolution will tend to undermine in the target state the cause of either ideological moderates or foreign policy pragmatists who are calling for less hostile international policies, while confirming the claims of ideological conservatives who prescribe unmitigated hostility against rival states. These outcomes are most likely to obtain when moderates or pragmatists currently govern in the target regime. In these situations, the actions of ideological hard-liners in the initiating state are likely to strengthen the domestic power of ideological conservatives in the target country. Hard-liners in the Reagan administration, for example, did not want either to reciprocate

84. The Soviet Union, for example, experienced all three of these changes over the course of its Cold War struggle with the United States.

85. As Henry Kissinger expressed this point: "[T]he distinguishing feature of a revolutionary power [which conforms to an ideological hard-line position as I have described it] is not that it feels threatened—such feeling is inherent in the nature of international relations based on sovereign states—*but that nothing can reassure it.* Only absolute security—the neutralization of the opponent—is considered a sufficient guarantee, and thus the desire of one power for absolute security means absolute insecurity for all the others" (Henry Kissinger, *A World Restored: Metternich, Castlereagh, and the Problems of Peace, 1812–1822* [Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1964], p. 2, emphasis in original). One of the key means by which revolutionary powers try to "neutralize" opponents, as Kissinger's book makes clear, is through forcible regime promotion.

Gorbachev's significant foreign policy concessions to the United States or to recognize his more liberal domestic policies. This position dominated American foreign policy decision-making circles until 1987. U.S. negotiating intransigence undermined the position of Gorbachev and fellow reformers and strengthened that of Soviet ideological and foreign policy hard-liners.[86] The George W. Bush administration's highly aggressive policies toward Iran played a similar role in undermining reformers and foreign policy pragmatists in favor of ideological conservatives, as we shall see in chapter 2.

Third, hard-line policies may have additional costs in ideologically multipolar systems. Hard-line actions in these types of systems may push different groups of ideological enemies together when they would most likely otherwise stay apart. I discuss this problem more fully in the next section.

Finally, hard-line policies that are designed to force a revolution in ideologically multipolar worlds may achieve their objective of regime change, but provoke a revolution to the "wrong" ideological principles. In a discussion in 1961 over U.S. policies with regard to the Dominican Republic, President Kennedy recognized this danger created by pushing for ideological revolution in an ideologically multipolar region: "There are three possibilities in descending order of preference: a decent democratic regime, a continuation of the [dictatorial] Trujillo regime, or a [communist] Castro regime. We ought to aim at the first, but we really can't renounce the second until we are sure that we can avoid the third."[87]

This concern applies to U.S. interests in the Middle East today. Specifically, some analysts claim that pushing authoritarian regimes to liberalize may result in the ascension of Islamists to power. This worry is a legitimate one. In a number of elections in Muslim countries in the 2000s—including in Morocco and Bahrain in 2002, Yemen, Kuwait, and Jordan in 2003, Saudi Arabia in 2005, and the Palestinian Authority in 2006—Islamist parties did well.[88]

The fear that increased democracy in authoritarian states may lead to the empowerment of Islamists does not mean that U.S. leaders should not push for liberalization in these states. Instead, they should be careful which dimensions of liberalism they champion, and in what order. Studies have demonstrated that when democratic elections precede the creation of the core attributes of a thriving civil society (e.g., a flourishing middle class, a

86. Anatoly Dobrynin, *In Confidence: Moscow's Ambassador to America's Six Cold War Presidents* (New York: Times Books, 1995), pp. 544, 611.

87. Quoted in Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., *A Thousand Days: John F. Kennedy in the White House* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1965), p. 769.

88. For details, see F. Gregory Gause III, "Can Democracy Stop Terrorism?" *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 84, No. 5 (September/October 2005), pp. 73–74.

separation of political powers, a widespread respect for civil liberties, and well-formed political parties that represent a variety of interests), illiberal parties—including Islamists—often get elected.[89] Given this tendency, American policymakers would be wise to help establish these other benchmarks of liberal regimes in target states before pushing for elections.

The benefits and costs of ideological soft-line policies are largely the mirror image of those created by hard-line policies. On the negative side, cooperative policies such as economic and diplomatic engagement may cause leaders to underestimate the level of threat posed by ideological enemies, empower enemy regimes through enhanced economic growth and international legitimacy, and embolden ideological conservatives in other states to pursue aggressive foreign policy objectives if these leaders do not confront sufficient international resistance.

Soft-line policies, on the other hand, have two major benefits. First, they are likely to be more adept than hard-line ones at prying apart alliances among ideological enemies in ideologically multipolar systems. I develop this point below. Second, they may be better at facilitating ideological change in other states, at least under certain conditions. As explained, ideological soft-liners are sensitive to divisions in other states' ruling parties between ideological moderates and conservatives, and they advocate aiding moderates' domestic power. If a full-blown ideological revolution in a target state is a low-probability outcome in the short run (and revolutions are relatively rare historically), helping the cause of ideological reformers *who either are already in power or are reasonably likely to be so in the near future* may be the best way of facilitating ideological—and hence international policy—change in the present.

## When are Ideological Hard-line or Soft-line Policies More Appropriate?

There are five variables that are likely to affect when leaders are most inclined to adopt ideological hard- or soft-line tactics toward their ideological enemies. The last two are the most important from this study's perspective. The first of these five factors is the particular international worldviews, or what I have called ideological content, of different groups of policymakers. Some leaders are just more inclined than others to see the use of force abroad as more legitimate and efficacious in promoting ideological change.

89. Fareed Zakaria, *The Future of Freedom: Illiberal Democracy at Home and Abroad* (New York: WW Norton, 2003); Edward D. Mansfield and Jack Snyder, *Electing to Fight: Why Emerging Democracies Go to* War (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2005).

For example, both neoconservatives and classical liberals view the spread of democracy throughout the international system as an important humanitarian and security objective. Neoconservatives, though, are much more likely than liberals to view aggressive strategies as effective in achieving this goal in the same circumstances.[90]

Relative power distributions are the second variable that is likely to affect the tendency for politicians to adopt ideological hard- or soft-line policies. The more relative power a state possesses, the greater the ability of leaders to force others to conform to their preferences, including their ideological ones. Strong states have a much greater chance than weak ones to successfully export their ideological beliefs by force. Strong countries, as a result, are more likely to engage in such aggressive actions than are weak ones.

This does not mean that decision makers care about international ideological relationships only when security threats are "low" due to their relative power superiority. Indeed, states frequently dedicate major resources to international ideological exportation at precisely those times that they are most threatened, namely during wartime. The ideological conversion of enemy states was a central objective, for example, during the Wars of Religion in Europe in the seventeenth century, the Wars of the French Revolution in the 1790s, the First and Second World Wars, and America's wars in Afghanistan and Iraq in the 2000s.[91] My point is simply that relative power distributions help make different international strategies more or less likely to succeed, which in turn affects the likelihood of their adoption.

The tendency for leaders to engage in forcible ideological promotion during wartime points to a third condition under which politicians are likely to adopt ideological hard-line over soft-line policies. When the use-of-force threshold has already been passed and ideological enemies are at war with one another, it is natural that states will make regime conversion through hard-line actions one of their objectives. The likelihood that states will pursue the goal of ideological exportation primarily through cooperative, soft-line policies with countries with which they are currently at war is low.

The fourth and fifth conditions that affect the likelihood of leaders achieving their objectives through ideological hard- or soft-line policies are the most significant from this study's perspective, since they flow out of the causal logic developed above. These last two conditions thus inform the book's final hypothesis. The most important of all these factors is whether

90. On the legitimacy, indeed the necessity, of the use of force to promote ideological change abroad to neoconservative thinking, see Miller, "Explaining Changes in U.S. Grand Strategy," pp. 54–64.

91. On these points, see Haas, *The Ideological Origins of Great Power Politics*; Owen, *The Clash of Ideas in World Politics.*

ideological conservatives or reformers hold power in the enemy regime. When ideological conservatives govern in the target state, hard-line policies provide the best chance of deterring the provocative and aggressive international policies that these countries are likely to adopt under this condition. The more power a state controlled by ideological conservatives possesses, the more necessary hard-line policies by other countries will be. By thwarting conservatives' objectives, hard-line policies may also help empower ideological reformers who can point to conservatives' failed policies as a reason to change leaders. More cooperative soft-line strategies, in contrast, may embolden ideological conservatives to act on their offensive goals, thereby increasing the likelihood of international crises and conflicts developing. British and French appeasement policies toward Nazi Germany in the 1930s are the preeminent instance of this last mistake. In a related example, former Soviet Foreign Minister Litvinov asserted in 1946 that if the United States were to adopt a cooperative approach and grant all of the Soviet Union's territorial demands, this "would lead to the West's being faced, after a more or less short time, with the next series of demands," and thus a series of crises that could eventually lead to war.[92]

When ideological reformers govern or possess a significant amount of political power in the target regime, there is a greater likelihood of more cooperative relations developing with other states. The reassuring policies advocated by ideological soft-liners provide the best chance of cultivating these outcomes.[93] Hard-line actions, in contrast, are likely to discredit reformers' claims that more amicable relations with international ideological rivals are possible, while confirming ideological conservatives' assertions of irreconcilable enmity with these other states. Significantly improved relations under these latter conditions are unlikely.

A final variable that affects the probability of success for both hard- and soft-line policies is ideological polarity. Ideological polarity on this issue is once again best understood as an intervening variable that mediates the effects of ideological distances on leaders' foreign policies. Specifically,

92. Quoted in John Lewis Gaddis, *We Now Know: Rethinking Cold War History* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), p. 24.

93. In order for a soft-line strategy to succeed, ideological moderates must actually possess significant political influence in the target state. This cannot be a matter of fancy or speculation. British policymakers toward the Soviet Union in the 1930s, for example, were divided between ideological hard-liners (led by conservatives), who wanted to economically and diplomatically isolate their ideological enemy, and ideological soft-liners (led by socialists and liberals), who wanted to recognize the USSR and trade with it in the hopes of inducing more accommodating behavior. These soft-line policies largely failed, however, because there were few, if any, Soviet ideological moderates of significant political power. As Stephen Walt explains, "the claim that a trade agreement would strengthen Russian 'moderates' reveals both wishful thinking and the British leaders' continued failure to understand the basic nature of the Soviet system" (Walt, *Revolution and War*, p. 178; see also pp. 175–76).

ideological multipolarity tends to make the costs created by aggressive policies toward ideological enemies higher than those that exist in ideological bipolar worlds. In a system of three or more prominent ideological groups, consistent hard-line policies by ideological group A may in fact be doubly costly. In the first place, such policies may push ideological groups B and C together against A when B and C would likely otherwise be hostile toward one another.[94] At the same time, A's hostile actions may greatly inhibit, if not preclude, cooperation between A and one of the other two groups against the remaining third. American hostile policies toward Syria in the early 2000s, as we shall see in chapter 3, resulted in both these negative outcomes: the end of Syrian security cooperation with America against Islamic terrorists and a tightening of the Syrian-Iranian alliance.

Soft-line policies, in contrast, help leaders weaken alliances or potential alliances among ideological enemies in ideologically multipolar systems. Soft-line actions, in other words, allow leaders a better chance of manipulating in their state's favor the factors discussed previously that cause ideological rivals in ideologically multipolar worlds to ally.

As I explained above, alliances among ideological enemies are not like coalitions among other types of states. Members of these alliances are at the same time partners and rivals. The forces that bring ideological enemies into alignment may suppress, but they do not eliminate, the ideological sources of hostility that frequently exist among these types of states. These frictions will often create massive strains that will make coalitions among ideological enemies more unreliable and fragile than other types of alliances. These dynamics create an opportunity for states. The more external powers can help bring states' ideological differences to the forefront of their foreign policies, the more likely it is that the latter's alliances will weaken.

One prominent tactic that external powers can frequently use to help drive a wedge between two ideological enemies that are nevertheless allied is by adopting more accommodating policies toward the lesser of two threats. Such actions will likely reduce the forces that are pushing the allies together, which will in turn allow the ideological differences dividing these states to become much more salient to their relations.[95]

94. To express this point in terms of the framework developed earlier that examined the conditions for interideological alignment, hard-line policies such as military threats and regime exportation are likely to create both powerful balancing and domestic incentives for ideological enemies to ally.

95. This position is consistent with Crawford's extensive analysis of wedge strategies. Crawford argues that policies that "selectively accommodate" one state in an actual or likely enemy coalition while standing firm against another are ones that are the most likely to divide these countries. Policies of selective accommodation are likely to aggravate existing tensions among states and decrease common threat perceptions (Crawford, "Preventing Enemy Coalitions," pp. 158–61).

Notice that this analysis goes beyond realist prescriptions. Numerous realists, especially "offshore balancers," advocate that the United States adopt less intrusive and aggressive policies in the Middle East in order to reduce the balancing responses against it.[96] I argue that such policies are likely to be particularly effective in specific ideological contexts, namely when the United States confronts coalitions comprised of ideological enemies. It is easier to divide these types of alliances compared to ones among ideological allies because the conflicts of interests and hostilities will tend to be significantly higher in the former, all other things being equal.

Ideological differences create an opportunity to implement successful wedge strategies precisely because ideologies frequently have major effects on states' international relations. Prescient leaders will adopt policies that are designed to target and amplify these ideological differences among various enemies. The recognition—not the denial—of ideologies' international importance will in these instances augment states' security. By adopting soft-line policies toward the lesser of two threats in an ideologically multipolar system, leaders can better protect their security in relation to their most dangerous international enemy. I explore in detail these dynamics in chapter 3.

It might seem that some of the principal claims made in this chapter, namely that ideological multipolarity makes both alliances among ideological enemies and states' ability to adopt successful wedge strategies toward rival coalitions more likely, are in tension. This is not the case, however. The increased likelihood that ideological enemies will be able to ally in ideologically multipolar systems makes wedge strategies necessary. If ideological rivals never allied, there would be no need for other states to take proactive measures to try to split them apart. However, the continued tensions among ideological enemies, even when in an alliance, makes wedge strategies more likely to succeed than when the same policies are directed at a coalition of ideological allies. The increased need for wedge strategies toward alliances of ideological enemies in ideologically multipolar systems, as well as the increased probability of their success compared to other types of coalitions, reflects the dual nature of alliances of ideological enemies as both partners and rivals.

The preceding analysis of the relationship between ideological distance and ideological polarity with regards to wedge strategies in ideological multipolarity can be summarized as follows. Large ideological distances dividing states' leaders will tend to generate high threat perceptions among them. Conditions of ideological multipolarity, however,

96. Christopher Layne, "America's Middle East Grand Strategy after Iraq: The Moment for Offshore Balancing has Arrived," *Review of International Studies*, Vol. 35, No. 1 (January 2009), pp. 5–25; Stephen M. Walt, *Taming American Power: The Global Response to U.S. Primacy* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2005); Robert A. Pape, "The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 97, No. 3 (August 2003), pp. 343–61.

will create incentives for decision makers not to adopt highly aggressive policies toward at least one of their ideological rivals. Ideological polarity in this scenario tempers the effects of ideological distances.

Soft-line strategies in ideologically multipolar systems are likely to be most effective in driving a wedge between ideological rivals when ideological moderates govern in at least one of the enemy states. When hard-liners rule in all the other regimes, the probability of soft-line policies achieving their goals is reduced, even if the relative likelihood of success remains higher in ideologically multipolar than in bipolar systems.

The analysis in the previous sections generates the final hypotheses that I test in the case studies.

Hypothesis 3A: Large ideological distances dividing states' leaders will push these individuals to try to export their ideological principles to other countries as a central means of improving their international and domestic security.

Hypothesis 3B: Ideological soft-line policies are likely to be more effective in advancing a state's interests in relation to ideological enemies—including helping to stimulate ideological change in rival regimes and enhancing leaders' ability to pursue wedge tactics toward ideological enemies—when 1) ideological moderates possess significant political power in the target state, and/or 2) the system is one of ideological multipolarity. Ideological hard-line policies are likely to be more effective in advancing a state's interests in relation to ideological enemies when 1) ideological conservatives dominate in the target state, and 2) the system is one of ideological bipolarity.

## CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE ARGUMENT AND ITS RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHER PROMINENT INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS THEORIES

The preceding analysis provides a comprehensive explanation of how ideologies systematically affect international politics. The analysis contributes to theory development in a number of ways. First, the argument demonstrates how ideologies are likely to shape leaders' understandings of the threats to both their international and domestic interests, and thus ultimately their foreign policies. Many examinations of the effects of ideologies in international relations examine either leaders' domestic or international interests, but not both. Second, the argument possesses high generalizability. By examining the effects of ideological distances and the number of prominent ideological groups in a system on leaders' perceptions of threat, the causal logic applies to numerous ideological relationships, regardless of the unique qualities associated with specific legitimating principles. Third,

I examine the impact on leaders' foreign policies of a heretofore unexplored variable, what I label "ideological polarity." The number of major ideological groups has key international effects, including the likelihood of alliance formation and the probability of success of what I have called ideological hard- and soft-line international policies. A key dimension of this last analysis involves identifying what types of policies are likely to be most successful under what conditions in exporting decision makers' ideological principles.

My analysis both complements and challenges in important ways major international relations theories, including democratic peace, clash of civilizations, balance-of-threat, omnibalancing, and neorealist arguments. It also corrects a number of key shortcomings of these other theories, including laying the foundation for the creation of a more integrative analysis of the effects of ideological and power variables.

Both my argument and democratic peace theories predict cooperation between liberal regimes and mistrust and hostilities between liberals and illiberals. The two arguments, though, are founded on two different causal logics. I examine the effects of ideological distances and polarity on leaders' policies, whereas most democratic peace theorists base their claims and predictions on the unique behavioral prescriptions of liberalism (what I label "ideological content").[97] My analysis is thus more comprehensive than these other arguments, because it applies to a greater number of ideological relationships. Democratic peace theories also dedicate little analysis to the nature of interactions among different types of illiberals. Most democratic peace arguments tend to divide the world into "liberal" and "illiberal" ideological groups. Significant ideological differences among illiberals are either ignored or downplayed. This is a major omission. As my analysis based on the effects of ideological distances and polarity reveals, there is good reason to believe that different types of illiberal actors (e.g., communists and fascists or secular authoritarians and Islamic fundamentalists) are likely to be just as hostile to one another as they are toward liberals. This fact, as indicated in previous analysis, creates a number of important threats and opportunities to states' interests that democratic peace theories miss.[98]

My argument also has important areas of similarities with and differences from Samuel Huntington's clash-of-civilizations thesis, which is an

97. See, for example, Zeev Maoz and Bruce Russett, "Normative and Structural Causes of Democratic Peace, 1946–1986," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 87, No. 3 (September 1993), pp. 624–38.

98. This is not just an academic debate, but has key policy ramifications. I argue in chapter 3 that the Bush administration's failure to acknowledge the major ideological differences dividing illiberal Syria and Iran significantly hindered attempts to weaken these states' alliance, a long-standing American objective.

important one for predicting the future of U.S.-Muslim relations in particular. To Huntington, the most important determinant of international relations for the foreseeable future will be "civilizational" identities. Huntington defines a civilization as "the highest cultural grouping of people and the broadest level of cultural identity people have short of that which distinguishes humans from other species." He lists eight major civilizations in the contemporary system: Western, Confucian, Japanese, Islamic, Hindu, Slavic-Orthodox, Latin American, and possibly African.[99] Religion is a major dividing force among different civilizations.

If "civilization" is defined in terms of cultural and religious beliefs, then the clash-of-civilizations thesis is very different than my argument. By this definition, individuals' civilizational identities are distinct from their ideological ones, and the latter, according to Huntington, will not be a primary source of international conflict in the post–Cold War world.[100] People within the same civilization (culture/religion) can be dedicated to very different ideological objectives (e.g., the creation of different political and economic institutions). Hence, for example, the existence of Muslim liberals and illiberals. Individuals from different civilizations can also share ideological beliefs. Thus both Westerners and Muslims can be dedicated to the core tenets of political liberalism.

A strict cultural/religious understanding of civilization implies suspicion and conflict between Muslim and Western leaders regardless of ideological beliefs. Religious and cultural identities (e.g., being a Muslim) override ideological ones (e.g., being a liberal). Huntington, in short, predicts a "clash of civilizations" in Middle Eastern politics, whereas I predict a "clash of ideologies."

Huntington, though, is inconsistent in his analysis. He indicates, for example, that it is not Islamic beliefs per se that are the root source of hostilities with other groups, but particular interpretations of Islam. Thus he describes Turkey as a "torn" society, divided between leaders with Western and Islamist beliefs (even though almost all profess to be Muslims).[101] If the key source of international hostilities is particular domestic beliefs espoused by different groups from the same state, this is close to my definition of ideologies, and thus consistent with my argument. The empirical chapters provide a test of which of these understandings of "civilizational conflict" is more accurate.

99. Samuel P. Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations?" *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 72, No. 3 (Summer 1993), pp. 24–25; idem, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996).

100. Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations?," p. 22.

101. On Huntington's analysis of "torn" countries, see "The Clash of Civilizations?" pp. 42–45.

Third, the argument adds greater specificity to Stephen Walt's balance-of threat theory.[102] Walt claims that states balance against the greatest threats in the system, with threat defined as a combination of aggregate power, geographical proximity, offensive capabilities, and aggressive intentions. Walt most often operationalizes aggressive intentions by examining revealed preferences: those states that are behaving provocatively are coded as aggressive and vice versa.

This method, though accurate, leaves out many of the hard cases involved in assessing states' international objectives. All analysts will agree that states will judge others as aggressive if they are clearly behaving as such (e.g., by making threats or using force). The much more important question is how policymakers tend to judge one another's goals under conditions of uncertainty, i.e., when leaders' actions ambiguously reveal their foreign policy objectives.

My analysis addresses this issue by demonstrating how leaders frequently judge others' intentions by the degree of ideological differences dividing them. Ideological enemies will look at ambiguous evidence and assume the worst about one another's intentions. Conversely, as long as ideological allies have not unambiguously demonstrated their hostility to one another (i.e., as long as the condition of uncertainty is in effect), they are likely to give one another the benefit of the doubt and assess one another's intentions in a favorable light. My argument, in other words, suggests that different ideological groups within the same country are likely to interpret the exact same evidence in very different ways. In chapters 2 and 4, I show how different ideological factions in Iran and Turkey, respectively, judged American intentions very differently despite the constancy for all these groups of American power and policies. Iranian and Turkish reformers and liberalizers were consistently more charitable in their assessments than Islamist groups. Because conditions of uncertainty will dominate most states' security relations most of the time, we can expect ideological differences to be central to how leaders understand their security environment in a correspondingly high percentage of cases.

My analysis contains some similarities with Steven David's "omnibalancing" argument. By this term, David means that leaders will resist both external threats to their state's security and internal dangers to their domestic authority.[103] My argument obviously shares his focus on these dual dangers. David, though, explicitly denies the impact of ideologies on leaders' balancing policies, whereas I demonstrate their centrality.[104] Moreover, David

102. See Walt, *The Origins of Alliances*.

103. David, "Explaining Third World Alignment"; Steven R. David, *Choosing Sides: Alignment and Realignment in the Third World* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991).

104. David, "Explaining Third World Alignment," pp. 247–48.

frequently makes alliance predictions contrary to those of my argument. When threats to leaders' domestic interests are high, David asserts that they are likely to "appease [or ally with] the international allies of their domestic opponents."[105] The objective of this strategy is to deny leaders' domestic enemies international support in order to be able to defeat them more effectively. According to my argument, in contrast, leaders are likely to balance against the international allies of ideological threats at home.

Neorealist theories offer the most direct challenge to my understanding of the sources of decision makers' perceptions of threat. Consequently, these theories constitute the principal competing arguments to my own. Kenneth Waltz expresses well this opposition when he writes that in international relations, realist calculations and power variables "weigh more heavily than ideological preferences or internal political pressures."[106] Although testing ideational versus realist theories is a frequent exercise in the international relations literature, this comparison remains important. Realist arguments continue to hold significant influence in both academic and policymaking circles, and they provide a meaningful benchmark to assess, in the case of this book, ideologies' international effects.

To neorealists, leaders' understanding of the dangers posed by the other actors in the system are primarily a product of relative power distributions. The greater the power disparity among states, the greater the tendency for the weaker to fear the stronger, and thus the greater the incentives to try to reduce this capabilities gap by increasing military spending and attempting to ally with other states. In comparison to issues of relative power, decision makers will pay relatively little attention to ideological variables in making their most important security choices. As Waltz explains, to realists "considerations of power dominate considerations of ideology."[107] Or as John Mearsheimer asserts with regard to states' alliances policies in particular: "When great powers confront a serious threat . . . they pay little attention to ideology as they search for alliance partners."[108]

If neorealists' understandings of the sources of leaders' threat perceptions are correct, then the evidence should reveal three prominent tendencies. First, we should see decision makers' perceptions of threat and behavior more consistently tracking changes in the distribution and projection of power than shifts in any other variable. Second, we should not

105. David, "Explaining Third World Alignment," p. 236.

106. Kenneth Waltz, "Reflections on *Theory of International Politics*: A Response to My Critics," in Robert O. Keohane, ed., *Neorealism and Its Critics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), p. 329.

107. Kenneth N. Waltz, "Realist Thought, Neorealist Theory," *Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 44, No. 1 (Spring/Summer 1990), p. 31.

108. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, p. 48.

see systematic, substantial differences in foreign policy perceptions and strategies among different groups of leaders in the same state. Because the international power variables confronting all decision makers of the same state are identical, we should expect to see different parties of the same state adopt fairly similar security policies. Third, because ideologies are largely irrelevant to states' core security policies, leaders should not dedicate significant resources to ideological exportation, especially during periods of high threats when resources are particularly scarce.

This book's hypotheses are falsified if these neorealist predictions are confirmed. A primary goal is therefore to demonstrate the latter's inadequacies. According to my argument, different ideological conditions make international relations both more and less conflictual than realists believe. Small ideological distances dividing states' leaders make international relations less conflictual than realists recognize because of the trust and common interests that tend to exist in these circumstances. Conversely, large ideological distances dividing leaders make international politics more conflictual than realists predict because the high levels of mistrust, fears of domestic subversion, and incentives for ideological exportation create major reasons for international hostilities that go beyond the effects of power distributions. A shift from ideological bipolarity to multipolarity can reinforce these last outcomes by decreasing the likelihood of effective balancing responses against threats, thereby lowering overall system stability.

Although a central goal of the book is to show the significance of ideologies to international politics in general and America's relations with Muslim-majority countries in the Middle East in particular, this does not mean that I believe that power variables are unimportant. Power considerations, in fact, combine with various dimensions of the book's causal logic to refine some of its predictions. The argument thus provides a framework for the creation of a more synthetic analysis that combines insights of both realist and ideological arguments.

Power variables are likely to combine with my argument to supplement its hypotheses in three major ways. First, a certain level of relative power is often—though not always—necessary before leaders feel threatened by ideological rivals. Although ideological enemies are likely to assume the worst about one another's international intentions, this tendency will very often only acquire significance toward groups that have sufficient capabilities to damage other's interests. Hostile intentions possessed by those groups that lack the capacity to harm will not be the focus of states' security policies. Thus, for example, it is unlikely that the United States government would be nearly as obsessed as it is with destroying al Qaeda—despite this group's clearly hostile intentions toward America—if the possibility of this organization acquiring weapons of mass destruction did not exist.

Power and ideologies, in other words, frequently work in tandem to generate threat perceptions. Power variables determine the universe of groups that possess the capacity to harm others. Ideological distances and polarity largely inform decision makers about which groups within this universe are likely to use their capabilities in a hostile manner. I develop this point further in this chapter's methods section.

High levels of relative power are not, however, necessary determinants of leaders' perceptions of threat as I have defined them. Politicians fear not only for the security of their state but for the continuation of their domestic power and the regime type they support. Ideological enemies can sometimes pose major subversive threats to other's domestic interests while possessing small amounts of relative power. Fear of communist subversion, not fear of Soviet power, for example, was the key reason that Britain, France, and the United States sent tens of thousands of troops to Russia to try to defeat the communists in the Russian civil war of 1918–21. As the scholar of Soviet politics Adam Ulam explains, at the time of the intervention "there was little fear as yet of Soviet or Communist power . . . Soviet Russia lay prostrate, in the throes of war and economic chaos, and few were willing to credit her leaders with the ability to dominate anything." What other leaders worried about was the "example of Russian Communism stirring up social trouble in their own countries."[109] More recently, American and Turkish policymakers in the 1990s, as I discuss in chapter 4, were very concerned about the subversive threat posed by Iran in Central Asia and the Balkans. This fear existed despite the fact that Iran was relatively weak due to eight years of brutal warfare with Iraq from 1980 to 1988.

A second, related way in which power and ideological variables combine to shape outcomes addresses the range of policy options available to various groups. Ideological distances and polarity go a long way in determining those states that leaders view as likely enemies; power factors will largely determine what policies decision makers are able to adopt to address these threats. Without sufficient relative power, leaders cannot maintain highly coercive or effective deterrent policies against even those groups that decision makers view as extremely threatening to their interests.

This fact should impact how we judge some states' behavior. When leaders of a state of low relative power are acting in pragmatic fashion towards an ideological enemy, this does not mean ideological variables are unimportant to their calculations. Foreign policy *outcomes* may be pragmatic because relative power considerations dictate they be so. International *preferences and perceptions*, in contrast, may be ideologically based.

109. Adam Ulam, *Expansion and Coexistence, Soviet Foreign Policy, 1917–73* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, Inc., 1974), p. 98.

Soviet leaders in the interwar years exhibited this duality. The Soviets in these years never doubted the permanent enmity of the capitalist powers because of the latter's ideological beliefs. They understood full well, though, that only short-run accommodation with some of these states could provide the resources and breathing space necessary to protect the USSR from these dangers. As Lenin explained in March 1919, "We are living not merely in a state, but in a system of states; and it is inconceivable that the Soviet republic should continue to exist for a long period side by side with imperialist states. Ultimately one or the other must conquer."[110] But in the short run, cooperation with capitalist countries was necessary in order to keep them divided, sow dissension among them, and increase Soviet power. Once again according to Lenin: "We must . . . exploit conflicts and antagonisms among the imperialists, slowly accumulating strength and maintaining the oasis of Soviet power in the middle of the raging imperialist sea."[111] "So long as we are alone and the capitalist world is strong . . . [we are] obliged to [interact with capitalists and] utilize [their] disagreements."[112] Some pragmatic policies, in short, were necessary to protect the USSR in a fierce ideological struggle. The necessity of pragmatic choices in the short run, though, should not obscure the ideological foundations of high levels of threat. To make this mistake would be to misunderstand core objectives and causes of states' international relations in key instances. To best judge the root sources of states' foreign policies, we need to examine leaders' statements that justify their decisions, and whether or not their policies changed when their country's relative power increased.

As the example in the previous paragraph indicates, the existence of some pragmatic, realist foreign policies does not necessarily refute my argument as long as this "pragmatism" is in response to ideologically based threats and/or designed to advance ideological objectives. A central question of the book is whether ideological distances and polarity account for leaders' assessments of their *greatest* threats, i.e., what concerns them the most in terms of dangers to their core international and domestic interests. If states are temporarily cooperating with a lesser threat in order to deal with a greater danger, and if these threat perceptions are a product of ideological relationships, then ideologies are still the key determinant of policies.

A third way in which power and ideological variables combine to shape outcomes is that under some conditions the former are likely to overwhelm the effects of the latter. Specifically, high power threats—especially when combined with aggressive actions—are likely to push ideological enemies

110. Quoted in Walt, *Revolution and War*, p. 165.
111. Quoted in Ulam, *Expansion and Coexistence*, p. 79.
112. Quoted in Walt, *Revolution and War*, p. 187.

to cooperate and ideological allies to mistrust one another. I discussed both of these conditions above (especially with regard to the conditions under which ideological enemies are likely to ally). A key point to remember is that the threats exhibited by states usually have to be quite large before they can overwhelm either the centrifugal effects created by ideological differences or the unifying effects created by ideological similarities.

Ideologies, in other words, create important *threshold effects* that power variables often must overcome in order to affect international relations in the ways just mentioned. Ideological differences create presumptions of enmity, and thus major impediments to alliances among ideological rivals. Conversely, ideological similarities create presumptions of amity, and thus incentives against hostile relations. These threshold effects will require power threats to be much more intense in order to shape outcomes than would be necessary in different ideological conditions.

## PREDICTIONS FOR U.S. RELATIONS WITH MUSLIM-MAJORITY COUNTRIES IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Middle Eastern politics since the Cold War's end allow for clear tests of my argument. The ideological distances separating various prominent groups of state leaders were very large. Furthermore, since at least the Iranian Revolution in 1979 the region has been an ideologically multipolar one, divided among multiple ideological factions that viewed one another as the antithesis of their beliefs. I label the three most important ideologies in the region Islamism (which I use interchangeably with the term "Islamic fundamentalism"), liberalism, and secular authoritarianism.[113] By this classification scheme, I am trying to highlight the large ideological differences separating such groups as: 1) the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Wahhabi religious establishment in Saudi Arabia, and al Qaeda; 2) republican Turkey, Israel, and the United States; and 3) Baathist Syria

113. Middle East experts have adopted similar divisions. Bruce Rutherford asserts that there are "three conceptions of political order [i.e., ideologies] that compete for preeminence in the Arab world—liberal, Islamic, and statist": Bruce K. Rutherford, *Egypt after Mubarak: Liberalism, Islam, and Democracy in the Arab World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), p. 29. Graham Fuller states that political Islam, and to a lesser extent liberalism, are the "only realistic major alternative movement[s] to most of today's authoritarian regimes" in the Middle East: Graham E. Fuller, *The Future of Political Islam* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), p. 15. In a study of secularism and international relations, Elizabeth Hurd uses the term "authoritarian secularist" to describe Iran during the reign of the shah: Elizabeth Shakman Hurd, *The Politics of Secularism in International Relations* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), p. 77. See also Angel Rabasa, Cheryl Benard, Lowell H. Schwartz, and Peter Sickle, *Building Moderate Muslim Networks* (Santa Monica: RAND, 2007), pp. 70–75.

and Iraq. Although some scholars may object to the terms that I use to label these different groups, few would deny that these three sets of actors are dedicated to very different ideological beliefs. My goal is not to get into a war of definitions but to recognize the major ideological differences among these groups and then to explore what impact these differences have had on international relations.

Islamists' main area of dispute with rival ideological groups is the proper source of a state's laws and institutions. Islamists believe that all laws and institutions must be based on Islamic law, or Sharia. All of a country's laws, in other words, "should be based on the word of God, as conveyed to the Prophet Muhammad and interpreted by those recognized as experts in Islamic law."[114] Islamists' views of Sharia (as I define this ideological group) are narrow and exclusionary. In the words of Graham Fuller, Islamists "follow a literal and narrow reading of the Qur'an and the traditions of the Prophet . . . [They] believe they have a monopoly on the sole correct understanding of Islam and demonstrate intolerance toward those who differ."[115] Because Islamists believe that Islamic law should inform all social, economic, and political activities, these individuals at their core seek the religious transformation of both state and society.[116] Thus Islamists advocate close interaction between religion and politics. To separate the two would be separating God's truth from history, which is blasphemous.[117] To Islamists, not only does the sovereignty of God take precedence over all other groups, but a main objective of government is to enforce personal piety, which is a goal that obviously precludes the separation of mosque and state. The centrality of Islamic law to Islamists' ideological beliefs also necessitates that the state be led by individuals who "are good Muslims and sufficiently Islamically trained to interpret and apply the Shariah."[118] Islamist ideology is represented by such groups as ideological conservatives in Iran, Wahhabis in Saudi Arabia, and al Qaeda leaders.

Notice that my understanding of Islamism based on the criteria described above is restrictive. Some argue that all Islamic groups that prioritize their

114. William Hale, "Christian Democracy and the JDP," in M. Hakan Yavuz, ed., *The Emergence of a New Turkey: Democracy and the AK Parti* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2006), p. 74.

115. Fuller, *The Future of Political Islam*, p. xii. See also Ray Takeyh and Nikolas K. Gvosdev, *The Receding Shadow of the Prophet: The Rise and Fall of Radical Political Islam* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2004), p. 4.

116. M. Hakan Yavuz, *Secularism and Muslim Democracy in Turkey* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p. 8.

117. On these points, see Fuller, *The Future of Political Islam*, pp. 17–19, 48, 51–53; Takeyh and Gvosdev, *The Receding Shadow of the Prophet*, pp. 4–15; Paul Berman, "The Philosopher of Islamic Terror," *New York Times Magazine*, March 23, 2003.

118. John Esposito, *Islam and Politics* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1984), p. 148.

religious identities above all others and who seek to apply these identities in the political world in some fashion should be considered Islamists.[119] I take a different approach. Some religiously oriented groups seek to find a "middle ground between secularism and fundamentalism" by incorporating key liberal tenets into their beliefs.[120] These tenets include rejecting a literalist interpretation of scripture and advocating such things as political pluralism and tolerance for both non-Muslims and Muslims who adhere to different interpretations of Islam. I do not label these groups Islamists; they are better understood as "reformers" or even, depending on the extent of their devotion to liberal tenets, "liberalizers" or "Islamo-liberals" (see below for more details on the latter). If my argument is correct, the more liberal the group, the lower the perceived threat of the United States. Thus in order to best test the book's hypotheses, it is important to adopt a narrow understanding of Islamism rather than lumping all religiously oriented groups into the same ideological category.

Like liberals in Western countries, liberals or liberalizers in Muslim-majority states advocate "democracy, human rights, pluralism, and vibrant civil society."[121] Unlike many liberals in the West, however, many liberalizers in Muslim-majority countries ground their prescriptions on religious principles. These individuals believe that Islam can and should impact politics, and that the Muslim faith should have something to say about the problems and challenges of modern political life. Yet much of the content of their political prescriptions is liberal. Hence some scholars' labeling of these parties as "Islamo-liberals."[122] Many Islamo-liberals argue, for example, that God gave individuals free will, which makes religious compulsion immoral. Similarly, because humans' interpretations of the Quran and God's will are always imperfect, pluralism, tolerance, democracy, separation of powers, the protection of minority rights, and an evolving interpretation of scripture are all necessities.[123] What matters most for this book is not why different groups possess the ideological beliefs that they do, but what these principles are. If groups consistently support democracy, pluralism, and internationally recognized human rights (including rights for

119. See, for example, Paul Berman, *The Flight of Intellectuals* (New York: Melville House, 2010); Andrew C. McCarthy, "Inventing Moderate Islam," National Review online, available at http://www.nationalreview.com/articles/244545/inventing-moderate-islam-andrew-c-mccarthy. Accessed November 15, 2011.

120. Marc Lynch, "Veiled Truths: The Rise of Political Islam in the West," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 89, No. 4 (July/August 2010), p. 142.

121. Fuller, *The Future of Political Islam*, p. 54.

122. See, for example, Stéphane Lacroix, "Between Islamists and Liberals: Saudi Arabia's New 'Islamo-Liberal' Reformists," *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 58, No. 3 (Summer 2004), pp. 345–65.

123. Fuller, *The Future of Political Islam*, pp. 33, 49–51, 54–56; Rutherford, *Egypt after Mubarak*, pp. 97–98, 110–17; Rabasa et al., *Building Moderate Muslim Networks*, p. 72.

women and religious minorities), they should be considered liberal. As the scholar of Middle Eastern politics Bruce Rutherford expresses this point, Islamic liberalizers "emphasize that their ideas are derived entirely from Islamic sources . . . Nonetheless, the specific institutional reforms that they advocate can be usefully described as 'liberal' in the sense that they incorporate the key features of classical liberalism. These key features include a clear and unbiased legal code, the separation of powers, checks and balances among these powers, an independent judiciary, and the protection of many civil and political rights."[124] Many of the political parties in Turkey, as I explore in chapter 4, are dedicated to core liberal tenets, and a liberalizing-reform movement possessed significant political power in Iran from 1997 to 2005, as I discuss in chapter 2.

Although liberals and liberalizers are not as powerful in the Middle East as either Islamists or secular authoritarians, this does not mean that they are unimportant to policymaking, as the chapters on Turkish and Iranian foreign policies demonstrate. Moreover, liberals are clearly an ideological "pole" in the Middle East when one is examining relations between the United States and various countries in the region. When Middle Eastern policymakers deal with the United States, the latter's ideology is critical to these relations. Similarly, when U.S. leaders interact with the Middle East, the Americans obviously take into account their own ideological beliefs, thus making liberalism central to their views of the region.

Secular authoritarians, such as Baathists in Syria and Iraq, are illiberal without being fundamentalist.[125] These states possessed dictatorial institutions, but the raison d'être of the regime was not the promotion of a particular religious doctrine or the religious transformation of state and society. Secular authoritarians, in short, do not assert that all laws and institutions need be derived from religious sources, in marked contrast to Islamists' views. This does not mean that secular authoritarians like Saddam Hussein or Hafez al-Asad did not, at times, use Islamic symbols and language to try to increase the legitimacy of their regime. In clear contrast to Islamists, however, the former did not ground their authority on the protection and promotion of specific, exclusivist religious beliefs, nor was religious knowledge and behavior a litmus test for political power. To the contrary, secular

124. Rutherford, *Egypt after Mubarak*, pp. 121–22, note 204. See also Rabasa et al., *Building Moderate Muslim Networks*, p. 66.

125. Some scholars describe these authoritarian regimes as "nationalist" ones. Regardless of how we label these states, their ideological differences with Islamists remain clear. As Michaelle Browers explains, "although Arab nationalism has never been completely secular, it has based its principle of unity around such factors as language and geography rather than faith," which is the opposite of Islamism: Michaelle L. Browers, *Political Ideology in the Arab World: Accommodation and Transformation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p. 20; also pp. 1–5.

authoritarians significantly restricted the political power of religious authorities. As a 2007 study published by the RAND Corporation explains, "Authoritarian secularism, manifested in the ruling parties of Syria, Egypt, and Tunisia . . . subordinates religion as well as other social institutions to the purposes of the state and the ruling party."[126]

The extent of the major ideological differences among the three groups described above is confirmed by the fact that leaders of all three consistently viewed one another as ideological enemies. Members of each group recognized the others as clear threats to their ideological objectives, and they wanted to replace the others' legitimating principles with their own. Secular authoritarians like Hussein and Asad, for example, ruthlessly crushed Islamist and liberal groups, and both of the latter sought to overthrow the former.

If the causal logic and three hypotheses described throughout this chapter are correct, the large ideological distances dividing different groups of policymakers in the Middle East, combined with the region's ideological multipolarity, generate clear predictions for American international policies and interests. Based on the effects of ideological distances and the predictions of Hypothesis 1, America's relations with liberal groups in Muslim-majority states are likely to be ones of relatively low threat and often of cooperation. Liberals should be fairly trusting of America's international intentions, believe that they have a number of important shared interests with the United States, and view cooperation with America as an important means of advancing their goals of domestic liberalization. U.S. leaders are likely to reciprocate these perceptions of benign international intent.

In contrast, relations between the United States and illiberal Muslim groups—both Islamist and secular authoritarian—are likely to be highly threatening. Both sides will tend to assume the worst about one another's intentions and motives. Muslim illiberals will also tend to view the United States as a subversive threat to their domestic power and objectives, due to both the power of example and anticipated aid from America to rival domestic-ideological groups. U.S. leaders, due to the stability of the American political system, are unlikely to reciprocate these fears of domestic revolution. They may, though, fear the effects of subversion on a smaller scale, such as the rise of indigenous Islamist-terrorist groups inspired by international developments.

A related analysis applies to America's primary liberal ally in the region, Israel. Although both Muslim liberals and illiberals are likely to view Israel negatively, there are likely to be key differences. Liberals will tend to oppose

126. Rabasa et al., *Building Moderate Muslim Networks*, p. 122.

Israel largely because of its policies, namely perceived repeated, major violations of Palestinian rights. If these policies were to change, however, liberals in Muslim-majority states would be likely both to recognize Israel and to advocate peaceful relations with it.

Muslim illiberals' enmity toward Israel, in contrast, is likely to be much more enduring. Even in the context of changed Israeli policies that better protected Palestinian rights, many illiberals' ideological opposition to Israel would push them to continue to mistrust Israeli intentions and to fear the subversive effects of Israeli political and economic principles on their societies.

In addition to relations between liberal and illiberal actors, an analysis based on the effects of ideological distances also predicts high levels of threat and hostilities between different types of illiberals, namely Islamists and secular authoritarians. Ideological differences between these individuals will push them to assume the worst about one another's intentions and to worry about ideological subversion to the other's principles, as Hypothesis 1 predicts.

The large ideological differences dividing all these different groups will create major impediments to alliances among them. Only in the presence of the conditions described in Hypothesis 2 that tend to push different ideological groups together are these fears likely to be overcome for a sustained period of time. However, because the Middle East is an ideologically multipolar region, the conditions for interideological alignment are likely to be more prevalent than in other periods and places. Although there has been little variance in ideological polarity in the Middle East in recent decades, this does not mean that we cannot examine the effects of this variable in this system. If my argument is correct, we should see how ideological multipolarity in the Middle East mediates the effects of ideological distances on leaders' foreign policies, including creating conditions that push ideological enemies to align.

Finally, if Hypothesis 3A is correct, both American and Middle Eastern policymakers should have confronted powerful incentives to try to export their ideological principles as a means of protecting their interests. If Hypothesis 3B is accurate, reassuring, soft-line policies made by American leaders should have been the most effective in advancing U.S. interests toward illiberal regimes either when ideological moderates possessed significant political power in the target state, or when U.S. policymakers were trying to drive a wedge between different varieties of illiberal regimes in an ideologically multipolar system. Toward those illiberal countries controlled by ideological conservatives (especially toward those states deemed to be the greatest threat in the system), hard-line policies should have provided the better option.

## METHODOLOGY

### The Independent and Intervening Variables: Ideological Distance and Polarity

The book's argument has two main causal variables, the degree of ideological differences dividing decision makers from different states (ideological distance) and the number of prominent ideological groups in a particular system (ideological polarity). Ideological distance is the argument's primary independent variable. Ideological polarity is an intervening variable that mediates the effects of leaders' threat perceptions resulting from ideological distances and the incentives for particular foreign policies (the main policies that ideological polarity affects are choices of enemies and allies and the efficacy of various hard- and soft-line strategies for dealing with ideological rivals).

I operationalize ideological distance in a two-step process. The first requires identifying the core ideological beliefs of different groups of decision makers in any given state. Again, by "ideological beliefs" I am referring to leaders' central preferences for organizing the political world in general and domestic politics in particular. Key questions that I use to determine leaders' ideologies include: What are the preferred political institutions (e.g., authoritarian or representative) of the individuals under examination? Do they support political pluralism? How supportive are leaders of internationally recognized human rights, including rights for women and religious minorities? Do they support the separation of religion and politics or rule by religious authorities? Do they support or condone violence, especially against civilians?[127]

In order to capture the often substantial ideological differences among different groups of leaders in the same state, *I operationalize decision makers' ideological beliefs by party or factional ideology*. I judge political groups' core legitimating principles on the subjects discussed above by examining parties' political platforms and mission statements, the writings and speeches made by party or factional leaders, and their domestic policies.

As a control for my analysis, I examine extensively other scholars' judgments about the ideological objectives of different political groups. Experts on Middle Eastern politics are often in agreement about whether various individuals and groups are best categorized as Islamist, liberal, or secular authoritarian, which, as I detailed in the previous section, are the three main ideological categories that I use in the book. In addition to these three primary groupings, however, there are what I label ideological "reformers"

127. For a similar list of questions to ascertain groups' ideological beliefs, see Rabasa et al., *Building Moderate Muslim Networks*, p. 69.

or "moderates." These individuals possess hybrid ideologies. They explicitly advocate the combining of core ideological principles from at least two of the three primary ideological groups listed above. Reformers' ideologies are thus "in between" the ideological categories of liberal, Islamist, and secular authoritarian.

Operationalizing ideology by party or factional beliefs has the benefit of controlling for the effects of the core variables of realist theories. Realism predicts that different ideological groups in the same country will advocate fairly similar policies toward the United States, since these arguments' central variables—American power and policies—*are identical for all inhabitants of the same state*. If different groups of leaders from the same country (e.g., liberals, secular authoritarians, and Islamists) advocate very different international policies despite the constancy from their perspective of American power and policies, then these latter variables are clearly not the most important source of their choices. In this scenario, we can be reasonably confident of ideologies' causal effects on international relations.

After identifying the ideological beliefs of different groups of policymakers, I then make comparisons across states in order to ascertain the degree of ideological differences dividing them. The following questions are particularly important toward this end: Do politicians in State A explicitly emulate the ideological objectives of politicians in other regimes? Do different groups of decision makers advocate similar political, economic, social, and institutional objectives? Do groups of politicians in different states assert that they are members of the same transnational ideological group? How similar are states' methods of political representation and economic institutions? Do decision makers in a particular state advocate ideological objectives that leaders in other countries explicitly condemn for their own society?

Determining precisely how wide the ideological distances are that divide various groups of decision makers in different states is obviously not an exact science, since the variables involved are qualitative, not quantitative. Several considerations simplify the coding of this variable. To begin with, it is a fairly straightforward exercise to ascertain whether a particular leader is most closely aligned with liberal, Islamist, or secular-authoritarian principles, hence Middle Eastern scholars' frequent agreement on the core ideological beliefs of most major political actors in the region. Once this determination is made, judging transnational ideological distances, at a general level, is not complicated. If leaders from different states belong to the same ideological group, the ideological distance dividing them is small. If these individuals belong to different ideological groups, the ideological distance separating them is large. In this latter case, leaders should define their principles in opposition to one another and in many dimensions see

them as mutually exclusive. While "small" and "large" are not precise terms, they are sufficiently descriptive to test the argument's hypotheses. "Small" ideological distances should lead to low threat perceptions, and "large" ideological distances should lead to high levels of threat.

There is an important exception to this method of operationalization involving the relationship between some Sunni and Shia Islamists. Objective measurements of these groups' ideological beliefs indicate that they have much more in common with one another than with either secular authoritarians or liberals. Some Islamists hold this view. Many others, however—including both Wahhabis in Saudi Arabia and al Qaeda members—view Shias as heretical idolaters, and thus in some ways "worse" than nonbelievers. In these instances, leaders' *perceptions* of the ideological distances between the two groups are very large. These perceptions will be used to measure ideological distances in these cases.[128]

When the beliefs of ideological "reformers" are added to the analysis, measuring ideological distances becomes more complex. Reformers, by definition, both reject and embrace core principles of different ideological groups. It is thus difficult to know precisely how much the ideological distances dividing reformers from other ideological groups change when these individuals come to power.

Fortunately, we do not have to possess exact measurements of this variable in these instances in order to test the book's argument. Instead, we can assess whether the ideological differences dividing states' leaders become *greater or less* over time with particular leadership changes in one or more countries. When reformers come to power in a particular state, we can code in a relatively straightforward manner whether or not this party change led to an increase or decrease in the ideological distances dividing this group from the other actors in the system, and we can make this assessment without having to ascertain precisely how wide these ideological distances are. If, for example, reformers in an illiberal regime advocate the adoption of more liberal principles for their state, the ideological distance dividing this

128. Examining actors' perceptions of ideological distances opens up potential endogeneity issues. Actors may justify hostilities with others by claiming that they are ideological rivals. Conversely, leaders may rationalize cooperation with others by asserting that they either are ideological allies or that they share the same ideological enemies. To control for these problems, I will ascertain how stable leaders' ideological perceptions were, i.e., if these views existed well before periods of conflict or cooperation with others, and if they remained the same throughout these different outcomes. It is worth reiterating that examining the perceptions and policies of different ideological groups from the same country helps to ensure that leaders' ideological beliefs are the root source of their international relations and not the reverse. If different groups from the same state advocate significantly different foreign policies, we can be confident that other systemic variables—such as international power distributions—are not the key cause of these preferences, because these variables are identical for all members of the same country.

group from liberal regimes is obviously smaller in comparison to this same measurement for ideological conservatives. In cases like these, all we have to know to test the argument are 1) that reformers represent a major ideological change from the previous leaders who held power, and 2) which groups in the system the reformers are ideologically closer to and farther from than were their predecessors.

Once we determine if ideological distances become smaller or larger with reformers' ascension to power, we can then observe if these changes on the independent variable led to changes in politicians' perceptions of threat and behavior in ways consistent with the argument. The same logic applies if ideological conservatives (re)acquire political dominance.

I measure ideological polarity by counting the number of clearly distinct major ideological groups that are salient to leaders' security calculations. Proponents of different ideological groups will see their principles as fundamentally different from one another's beliefs. These individuals will very often explicitly define their beliefs in opposition to those of other ideological groups. When the threats to a state's interests originate primarily from one ideological enemy, I label the period from this group's perspective one of "ideological bipolarity." If main dangers come from two or more ideological rivals, I label the period one of "ideological multipolarity."

Notice that I define ideological polarity by the number of ideological rivals that are "salient" to leaders' security calculations. By "salient" I mean that leaders of one ideological group must view another as possessing the capacity to threaten in a significant way their domestic and/or international interests. There are any number of ideological beliefs in existence, but only those that have the ability to threaten others—either militarily or by a high probability of domestic subversion—should be counted in measurements of ideological polarity. Thus, to be salient, particular ideological beliefs must either possess widespread international appeal or define the core legitimating principles of a major power in a region.[129] There are, for example, a number of neo-Nazi parties in Europe today. Because all are weak, however, this ideology is not sufficiently threatening either internationally or domestically to constitute an ideological pole.

This analysis reiterates a point made earlier: power and ideologies frequently combine to shape outcomes. Capabilities are one factor that makes ideological rivals salient to one another's security calculations. It its worth reiterating, though, that ideological threats are not epiphenomena of power-based ones. The same capabilities possessed by an ideological ally in most cases will not generate the same threat as that of an ideological enemy.

129. For related analysis, see Owen, *Clash of Ideas in World Politics*, pp. 60, 68, 70.

Moreover, power variables are only one source of threat that makes an ideological enemy salient to another's policies.

Based on the preceding discussion, I measure ideological polarity in a two-step process. First, I identify those groups in a given region that possess the capacity to threaten in a significant way others' international and/or domestic interests. Which groups, in other words, are salient to others' security assessments? I then count the number of distinct major ideological belief systems that are espoused by this universe of actors in order to ascertain if the system is one of ideological bipolarity or multipolarity.[130]

My unit of analysis for determining ideological polarity is primarily regional, the extent of which I define by the limits of states' abilities to inflict harm on one another. Most states lack the capacity to project force or influence over long distances. Consequently, the main focus of most countries' security concerns—and thus their understandings of ideological polarity—will be on nearby states. When countries with global interests and capabilities (e.g., the United States) consistently participate in the security architecture and policies of a region, they will be included in my coding of ideological polarity.

## The Dependent Variables: Leaders' Perceptions of Threat and Consequent Security Policies

My conception of threats to leaders' interests is divided into two main components, dangers to the security of their state and threats to their domestic power. I determine politicians' understandings of threats to both sets of interests by answering the following questions: Does a particular group of decision makers see another state or group as a likely danger or support to its international-security interests? Does a particular group of decision makers see another state or group as likely to subvert or bolster the former's domestic power and legitimacy? How worried and obsessed are leaders with these dangers? In other words, how high do they claim the threats to

130. The factors that make ideological rivals salient to one another's decision making are related to but distinct from the balancing and domestic incentives for alliances among ideological enemies that I discussed earlier. The balancing and domestic incentives for alliances among ideological enemies represent *a significant intensification* of the threats that create ideological saliency. In other words, ideological group A must be able to threaten ideological group B's domestic or international interests before A becomes salient to B's security calculations. This threat, though, very often must be extreme before B will ally with ideological group C to counter A. In the 1930s, for example, fascist Germany was clearly salient to British and French security calculations. The threat posed by Germany, though, was not sufficiently high to induce the Western democracies to ally with the Soviet Union in this decade.

be? Answers to these questions will be revealed primarily by examining leaders' public and private statements on these issues.

An important dimension of my analysis is to examine how perceptions of threat are translated into specific foreign policies. Because the particular behaviors and outcomes predicted by the argument are sufficiently specific and descriptive, most of these latter variables can be operationalized in a straightforward manner. Key policies that reflect leaders' threat perceptions include the threat or use of force; trends in defense spending; if leaders tried to contain rival powers by strategically, diplomatically, culturally, and economically isolating them; and if statesmen provided economic, diplomatic, or military support to particular countries or groups.

As discussed above, the two most important foreign policy outcomes that I analyze are choices of allies and whether leaders attempted to export particular institutional structures and ideological values to other actors in the system. A central dimension of this latter outcome is whether leaders tried to spread their ideological principles primarily by hard-line actions of economic, diplomatic, and military containment or by soft-line policies of engagement that recognized ideological divisions among policymakers in target states.

## Research Methods

My approach for ascertaining the impact of ideological distances and polarity on leaders' threat perceptions and foreign policies utilizes three different research methods: congruence procedure, longitudinal analysis, and process tracing.[131] Congruence procedure determines whether or not there is a *strong correlation* between the argument's predictions and leaders' perceptions of threat and consequent international choices. For example, if ideological distances are critical to leaders' threat perceptions and consequent policies toward America, there should be clear policy differences between liberals and illiberals, with the former consistently more cooperative toward the United States than the latter. This division does not mean that ideological distances are the key determinant of politicians' international decisions, but without a high correlation between the two variables, there can be no causal relationship.

Longitudinal analysis and process tracing move us from correlational to causal reasoning. Longitudinal analysis involves close examination of the *timing* of changes on the independent and dependent variables in question.

131. On these methods, see Gary King, Robert O. Keohane, and Sidney Verba, *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994).

When the independent variables changed, did the dependent variables shift soon after? If the dependent variables changed, was there movement on the independent variables not long before? If we cannot answer "yes" to these two questions, a causal relationship between these two variables is unlikely. If political ideologies are a critical determinant of leaders' foreign policies, major changes in either ideological distances or polarity should be followed by important shifts in policies, and major alterations in policies should be preceded by significant changes in ideological distance or polarity.

Process tracing is one of the best methods in the social sciences for testing causality. This method tries to get inside actors' heads by examining private and public source material (e.g., governmental documents and leaders' correspondence, diaries, speeches, and pronouncements) that explain why leaders make the choices they do. If policymakers do not publicly and privately attribute their actions to the independent variables in question, the likelihood that ideologies are having a major impact on policies is significantly reduced. If ideological distances are a critical determinant of leaders' perceptions of threat and consequent foreign policies, illiberals in Muslim-majority countries, for example, should describe their relationships with the United States as ones of high threat, due to beliefs in the inevitability of conflict and fears of subversion to Western values and beliefs. Liberals in these same states, in contrast, should both be fairly trusting of American leaders' international intentions and see the United States as a support to their domestic interests. These different parties should not primarily attribute or justify their actions by referring to U.S. policies and power. Similarly, ideological enemies should recognize that their ideological differences are a major barrier to forming an alliance, and they should be willing to do so only in circumstances acknowledged to be extraordinary.

If congruence procedure, longitudinal analysis, and process tracing all point to a causal relationship between ideological distance and polarity on one hand and perceptions of threat and subsequent international policies on the other, we can be confident in the accuracy of these findings. The same conclusion is reached if the evidence reveals significant variation in the international perceptions and policies advocated by different ideological factions in the same state at the same time.

To implement these methods, I rely primarily on secondary sources, most notably Middle Eastern and Western newspapers and, more importantly, numerous books and articles published by prominent Middle Eastern scholars (from both the region and Western countries). These scholars have exhaustively combed primary source materials, and they have collectively documented both the ideological beliefs and the international preferences and policies of the key parties and factions in the states that I examine.

This book connects these two sets of findings using the methods described above to see if they are causally related.

To put this point another way, I am examining Middle Eastern politics from the perspective of an international relations theorist, not an area studies expert. I have thus both developed causal mechanisms that detail the most likely pathways by which ideologies are likely to shape leaders' perceptions of threats and consequent international choices, and identified a series of research methods that increase our confidence that ideologies and not some other variables are in fact the key determinant of outcomes. These developments are critical both to determine what evidence to look for when testing the effects of ideologies in international relations and to discern the overall significance of this evidence (e.g., do alliances among ideological enemies necessarily confirm realist predictions?). I rely to a great extent on regional experts, however, to provide this evidence.

I should also point out that substantial portions of my analysis are designed in a way that significantly reduces reliance on untranslated materials. Of the three principal research methods that I utilize—congruence procedure, longitudinal analysis, and process tracing—the first two need not rely on access to internal, untranslated documents. Instead, what is needed is close analysis of the diplomatic history of various Middle Eastern parties and factions, specifically *what* were the foreign policies of these groups and *when* did they implement them? This diplomatic history is available in the sources described above.

Analysis of primary source material is most useful for process tracing and the attempt to get inside leaders' heads to try to understand why they made the decisions they did. My reliance on the scholarship of area studies experts is high for this method.

### Case Studies and Selection Criteria

The evidence presented in the book consists of four case studies. Two analyze the relationship in Iran and Turkey between different governing parties' or groups' ideologies and their foreign policies. The third analyzes the factors that led to the creation of the Syrian-Iranian alliance, as well as the ups and downs of this coalition since its origins. The fourth analyzes the sources of the U.S.-Saudi alliance. My time frame for the case studies is primarily the 1990s and the 2000s (through the presidency of George W. Bush), though the Syrian-Iranian chapter begins with the Iranian Revolution in 1979 and the U.S.-Saudi chapter has some analysis of this alliance during the Cold War. Some developments that occurred during the Obama presidency are also included in the case studies, as well as in the book's conclusion.

I choose these cases for analysis for the following reasons (in addition to the obvious one that the countries studied in the empirical chapters have played major roles in the development of American security policies in the Middle East). First, the Iranian and Turkish chapters provide variation on the argument's independent variable, ideological distance. This variation is exhibited in several ways. At the macro level, the political system of Iran is very illiberal, whereas Turkey is the most liberal of all Muslim-majority Middle Eastern countries. Turkey and Iran have also possessed many of the best-defined ideological factions and parties of all Middle Eastern countries, and several of these different ideological groups have held significant political power at different times since the end of the Cold War. Turkey in these years was governed by both Islamist and liberalizing parties, and both ideological conservatives (i.e., Islamists) and reformers/liberalizers held political power in Iran. Changes in the ideologies of a state's governing parties—and thus shifts in the ideological distances dividing this country from others—allow for particularly effective tests of Hypothesis 1. These situations not only exhibit variation in the argument's independent variable when many other competing variables are held constant, but allow for a relatively large number of tests of the argument in a limited number of cases. I examine the perceptions and policies of four ideological groups in Turkey and two in Iran.

I choose to examine the origins and major developments of the Syrian-Iranian and U.S.-Saudi alliances because these cases allow an examination of the conditions under which ideological rivals are likely to ally. These chapters thus both provide tests of Hypothesis 2 and demonstrate how ideological polarity can shape alliance policies. Specifically, I demonstrate in both cases how ideological multipolarity can help create the conditions that are most likely to incline ideological enemies to align. Of all the case studies, realist predictions did the best in the U.S.-Saudi chapter. Including this case in the book will, as a result, be particularly useful in helping us understand the limits of ideological analyses, as well the conditions under which realist theories are likely to become more accurate than my own.

Finally, because the chapters examine the perceptions and policies of a multitude of ideological groups, we can see 1) if leaders tended to believe that the exportation of their legitimating principles would advance their interests, and 2) which types of actions—hard- or soft-line—have tended to be most and least successful under which conditions in protecting states' security. These are the key issues of Hypothesis 3.

I now turn to my case studies. I begin with an analysis of the core security policies pursued by different ideological factions in Iran during the Clinton and George W. Bush presidencies, as well as the American leaders' reactions to them.

## CHAPTER 2

# Iranian Ideological Factions and International Policies, 1997–2009

The Iranian Revolution in 1979 was a watershed event for Middle Eastern politics and America's security interests in the region. Before the revolution, Iran was one of America's closest allies among Muslim-majority countries; afterward, it was one of America's bitterest enemies. The new Iranian leaders denounced the United States as the "Great Satan" and an implacable foe whose influence must be pushed out of the Middle East.

This hostility continued through the decades. In 2002, President George W. Bush labeled Iran, along with Iraq and North Korea, as a founding member of the "Axis of Evil." The U.S. government consistently categorized Iran as one of the principal sources of instability in the Middle East, including by being one of the world's main supporters of international terrorism, undermining the Israeli-Palestinian peace process, and supporting factional strife in Iraq after America's 2003 invasion. A primary foreign policy goal of American policymakers has been to prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons. Many U.S. officials feared that Iran's leaders would either use these weapons to facilitate international aggression or perhaps even use them against America or its allies (either directly or through terrorist proxies).

The suspicion and vitriol from Iranian leaders has been just as intense. In 2001, for example, Ayatollah Mahmood Hashemi Shahroudi, the chief of the judiciary, stated that Iran's "national interests lie with antagonizing the

Great Satan. We condemn any cowardly stance toward America and any word on compromise with the Great Satan."[1] Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei reacted to President Bush's "Axis of Evil" speech by claiming that Bush had demonstrated a "thirst for human blood" and that America was the "world's most cursed Satan."[2]

This chapter examines the root sources of Iranian enmity toward the United States from 1997 to 2009. Specifically, my goal is to determine whether Iranian hostility toward America was primarily a product of ideological variables or realist balancing responses to American power and policies. I choose 1997 as the beginning point of my analysis because that year witnessed the ascension to power of a different ideological faction to Iran's presidency, which altered the ideological distance dividing some of Iran's key decision makers from their American counterparts. This change in the study's independent variable allows for a straightforward test of my argument. If American power and policies were the root source of enmity with America, then different Iranian factions after 1997 should have pursued fairly similar international relations despite their domestic differences. However, if ideological distances were central to politicians' perceptions of threats, then these different factions should have advocated markedly different foreign policies toward the United States. As we shall see, this last prediction was confirmed.[3]

Because I concentrate in this chapter on U.S.-Iranian bilateral relations, the primary focus of my analysis is testing the predictions of Hypotheses 1, 3A, and 3B. These examine, respectively, the effects of ideological distances on states' relations, leaders' interest in exporting their ideological principles as a means of improving their security, and the appropriateness of different foreign policy strategies (which I label ideological hard- and soft-line actions) toward ideological rivals. I test the predictions of Hypothesis 2 and the effects of ideological distances and polarity on Iranian alliance policies (as well as how these policies affected U.S. interests) in Chapter 3, which focuses on the dynamics of the Syrian-Iranian alliance.

1. Quoted in Kenneth Pollack and Ray Takeyh, "Taking on Tehran," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 84, No. 2 (March/April 2005), p. 23.

2. Quoted in A. William Samii, "Tehran, Washington, and Terror: No Agreement to Differ," *Middle East Review of International Affairs*, Vol. 6, No. 3 (September 2002), p. 63, note 29.

3. In addition to demonstrating major differences after 1997 in foreign policy preferences by factional-ideological beliefs, I also highlight how Iran's foreign policies changed in key ways compared to pre-1997 years. Space constraints, however, prevent extensive analysis of Iranian international relations before that year. For an excellent examination of Iranian foreign policies in the 1980s and 1990s that shows the centrality of ideology to a number of key international issues, including hostility to foreign powers (especially America and Israel), a preeminent interest in exporting the revolution, and paranoia over ideological subversion, see Ray Takeyh, *Guardians of the Revolution: Iran and the World in the Age of the Ayatollahs* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).

## IRAN'S POLITICAL FACTIONS AND THEIR DOMESTIC PREFERENCES

From roughly 1997 to 2005, Iranian leaders were divided into two main ideological groups, frequently labeled "reformers" and "conservatives."[4] Members of these factions possessed very different visions for the domestic future of Iran. The extent of the ideological differences dividing these groups is revealed by a number of factors, including the lengths that each went to exclude the other from power (including at times using physical violence against one another's supporters), the ferocity of the epithets that each hurled at the other, and the depth of their policy disagreements.

### Conservatives' Ideological Principles

Iranian conservatives were Islamists as I described this category in chapter 1. Their primary domestic objective was to preserve the political system that was established by Ayatollah Ruhollah Musavi Khomeini after the Iranian Revolution in 1979, which included rule by clergy based on a narrow interpretation

4. For other scholars who adopt this taxonomy, see David Menashri, *Post-Revolutionary Politics in Iran: Religion, Society, and Power* (London: Frank Cass, 2001); Shahram Chubin, *Iran's Nuclear Ambitions* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2006); Ali Gheissari and Vali Nasr, "The Conservative Consolidation," *Survival*, Vol. 47, No. 2 (Summer 2005), pp. 175–90; Daniel Heradstveit and G. Matthew Bonham, "What the Axis of Evil Metaphor Did to Iran," *The Middle East Journal*, Vol. 61, No. 3 (Summer 2007), pp. 421–440 available online at http://faculty.maxwell.syr.edu/gmbonham/Iran.pdf (accessed November 15, 2011). Not all agree on this categorization, however. Some scholars describe four primary ideological factions among Iran's elites: the "traditional" right, the "modern" right, the "Iranian left," and "neofundamentalists"; see Mehdi Moslem, *Factional Politics in Post-Khomeini Iran* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2002); Wilfried Buchta, *Who Rules Iran? The Structure of Power in the Islamic Republic* (Washington, DC: Washington Institute for Near East Policy and Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, 2000). Members of the modern right and Iranian left, however, largely agreed on political principles, including views on minority rights and popular sovereignty. Both groups thus advocated important liberalizing political reforms. Their main areas of disagreement were economic. Members of the modern right advocated the creation of an industrialized capitalist economy, whereas the Iranian left preferred much higher levels of governmental intervention in the economy. Nevertheless, because both these groups advocated important liberalizing reforms, I feel justified in combining these two groups into the larger political category of "reformers." (Consistent with this analysis, these two groups frequently cooperated with one another after 1997.) Members of the traditional right and neofundamentalists also agreed for the most part on ideological goals, and they, too, cooperated extensively with one another in the political arena; see Moslem, *Factional Politics in Post-Khomeini Iran*, pp. 151, 179, 227; Frederic Wehrey, Jerrold Green, Brian Nichiporuk, Alireza Nader, and Lydia Hansell, *The Rise of the Pasdaran: Assessing the Domestic Roles of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2009). Whenever I use the term "conservative," I am referring to the combined group of "traditional" rightists and neofundamentalists, the latter of which are sometimes called "neoconservatives"; see Anoushiravan Ehteshami and Mahjoob Zweiri, *Iran and the Rise of the Neoconservatives: The Politics of Tehran's Silent Revolution* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2007).

of Islamic law; governmental regulation of personal virtue; and a rejection of what conservatives perceived to be defining principles of Western culture: materialism, secularism, immorality, and the separation of religion from politics. Central to conservatives' ideology was Khomeini's doctrine of *velayat-e faqih*, or rule by the jurisprudent (a reference to the Office of the Supreme Leader of the Revolution, which is the most powerful political institution in Iran and one that is filled by a leading Shiite cleric). This doctrine asserts the necessity of clerics' continued political dominance, and it legitimates the Iranian theocracy.[5]

Conservatives believed that their Islamist ideology was antithetical to Western liberalism, and that in order to preserve the former in Iran the latter must be eliminated. According to the conservative candidate in the 1997 presidential elections, Ali Akbar Nateq-Nuri (who was widely expected to win the election), "Liberalism is a real threat for the country and it must be eradicated."[6] Or, as two other conservatives asserted, "Western liberal culture is incompatible with Islamic culture," and therefore only one or the other can survive.[7]

To Iranian conservatives, the religious dimension of the Islamic Republic of Iran (IRI) was much more important than the republican component. Indeed, some conservatives rejected democratic discourse and the related protection of political pluralism altogether. According, for example, to Ayatollah Mesbah Yazdi, who was a close advisor to President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, "the prophets of God did not believe in pluralism. They believed that only one idea was right."[8] Other conservatives claimed that the regime must be connected to and have some backing from the people. Democratic practices, though, were clearly subordinate to the preferences of the ruling clerics, especially the Supreme Leader.[9]

5. Among the most powerful conservative leaders in the period under investigation were Ayatollah Ali Khamenei (Supreme Leader of the Revolution), Mahmoud Ahmadinejad (President of Iran), Ayatollah Ahmad Jannati (head of the Council of Guardians), Ayatollah Mohammad Yazdi (head of the judicial system), Yahya Rahim-Safavi (Commander-in-Chief of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps, or IRGC), Mohsen Rezai (Secretary of the Expediency Council and former Commander-in-Chief of the IRGC), and Ali-Akbar Velayati (Advisor to the Supreme Leader on Foreign Affairs and former Minister of Foreign Affairs).

6. Quoted in Moslem, *Factional Politics in Post-Khomeini Iran*, p. 235.

7. Quoted in Moslem, *Factional Politics in Post-Khomeini Iran*, p. 108.

8. Quoted in Ray Takeyh, *Hidden Iran: Paradox and Power in the Islamic Republic* (New York: Times Books, 2006), p. 36. See also Meir Litvak, "Iran: The Clerical Debate on Democracy and Islam," in Joshua Teitelbaum, ed., *Political Liberalization in the Persian Gulf* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), p. 275. Yazdi had similar views on different interpretations of Islamic tenets. As he put it, "if someone tells you he has a new interpretation of Islam, sock him in the mouth!" (quoted in Karl Vick, "In Iran, Even Some On Right Warning Against Extremes," *Washington Post*, March 27, 2006).

9. Litvak, "Iran," pp. 272–74.

Given these views, conservatives asserted that whenever Islamic principles as defined by Islamic law and the ruling clerics came into conflict with preferences of the Iranian people or internationally recognized human rights, the former took precedence. It was unthinkable to Iranian conservatives, for example, to separate religion from politics or allow democratically elected officials the ability to overrule the most powerful clerics in the state. Separating religion from politics not only abrogated the state's responsibility to inculcate virtue in a society but took sovereignty out of the hands of those who (putatively) knew God's will the best. It was, as a result, a blasphemous proposition. To conservatives, popular sovereignty and the separation of church and state were dangerous Western ideas that were threatening to undermine the Iranian regime. According to Ali Khamenei, who became Supreme Leader in 1989: "The enemies of Islam are seeking to separate religion from politics. Using seductive Western concepts such as political parties, competitive pluralist political system, and bogus democracy, the Westernized are trying to present a utopic picture of Western societies and portray them as the only salvation for our Islamic society."[10]

## Reformers' Ideological Principles

Iranian reformers advocated important liberalizing changes for Iranian politics and society.[11] Their principles thus represented a major move toward the foundational beliefs of Western countries, including the United States. This does not mean that reformers were liberals in the Western sense or that they did not possess major ideological differences with Western states. The ideological distance dividing reformers from Western regimes, however,

10. Quoted in Moslem, *Factional Politics in Post-Khomeini Iran*, pp. 258–59. See also ibid., p. 232; Daniel Brumberg, *Reinventing Khomeini: The Struggle for Reform in Iran* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), pp. 227–28.

11. Reformers from the traditional "Iranian left" followed a winding path to their more liberal ideological beliefs. Until the early 1990s, many members of the Iranian left were closer to Marxism than liberalism. The demise of the Soviet Union helped shake their faith in this ideology. Even more important to the Iranian left's ideological transformation was their virtual exclusion from politics in the early 1990s. This led these groups to adopt ideological principles that better protected minority rights and political pluralism. This change also resulted in much more favorable views of the United States and its allies, as the book's argument predicts. As Daniel Brumberg explains, the Iranian left could not "embrace Montesquieu's concept of separation of powers and continuously vilify the West" (Brumberg, *Reinventing Khomeini*, p. 183; see also ibid., pp. 154, 175–76, 195–96, 236; Moslem, *Factional Politics in Post-Khomeini Iran*, pp. 113–14, 127, 151, 227).

was much smaller than the ideological gap separating Iranian conservatives from these states.[12]

According to Mohammad Khatami, a leading reformer who was Iran's president from 1997 to 2005, reformers' core political goal was to "introduce to the world the model of religious democracy."[13] Reformers, in other words, were trying to find a balance between liberal values and the Islamist system that had existed in Iran since 1979.[14] On the one hand, the goal of "religious democracy" represented a rejection of liberal tenets because this objective both required much greater involvement in political affairs by religious authorities than was deemed acceptable in Western states, and meant that some individual freedoms must be compromised in order to maintain the religious identity of the regime. Leading reformers, including Khatami, argued that individuals did not have the right either to question Islamic tenets (many reformers denied the validity of freedom *from* religion) or to overthrow the Islamic Republic (people could reform the regime, but not destroy it). As Khatami explained in a 1997 speech, "no person is at liberty to endanger the security of the society, the interests of the country . . . [or] scar the fundamentals of Islam."[15] According to reformers, only by maintaining the religious authority and identity of the regime could Iran maintain a level of morality and spirituality that Western democracies lacked.[16]

In other ways, however, reformers were in accord with core liberal principles, and thus in major ideological disagreement with Iranian conservatives.

12. Leading reformers from 1997 to 2009 included Mohammad Khatami (President of Iran), Abdol Karim Soroush (a leading scholar and philosophical inspiration to many reformers), Ataollah Mohajerani (Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance), Abdollah Nuri (Vice President), and Mehdi Karrubi (Speaker of Parliament). Conspicuously absent from this list is Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, who was one of Iran's most powerful politicians in the period under analysis. He was President of Iran from 1989 to 1997 and Chairman of the Expediency Council from 1997 and Chairman of the Assembly of Experts from 1997 to 2011. I omit Rafsanjani from placement in an ideological grouping because his domestic-ideological preferences varied so much over the years that one may fairly categorize him as more of a political opportunist than someone with confirmed ideological principles. It is worth noting, though, that during each of Rafsanjani's ideological phases, he advocated foreign policies that were largely consistent with an ideological explanation of international behavior. During his more liberal periods, he pushed for more pragmatic and cooperative policies toward the United States than did conservatives. When Rafsanjani allied with conservatives domestically, he also largely supported their international policies, including significant hostility toward both America and Israel. See Moslem, *Factional Politics in Post-Khomeini Iran*, pp. 128–48, 175–79; Buchta, *Who Rules Iran?* pp. 150, 202; Menashri, *Post-Revolutionary Politics in Iran*, pp. 149–50; Sanam Vakil, "Reformed Rafsanjani Could Be a Force for Change," *The Financial Times*, June 16, 2005.

13. Quoted in Litvak, "Iran," p. 278.

14. Litvak, "Iran," p. 277; also Wehrey et al., *The Rise of the Pasdaran*, p. 15; Ehteshami and Zweiri, *Iran and the Rise of the Neoconservatives*, p. 10.

15. Quoted in Litvak, "Iran," pp. 290–91. On the preceding points, see ibid., pp. 290, 292, 298.

16. Litvak, "Iran," p. 297; also p. 290.

According to two scholars' assessment, "Khatami's reforms were an immense threat to [conservatives, who] felt the regime had been hijacked by unreligious people . . . [and that] 'their' Islamic Republic was being un-Islamized right in front of their eyes."[17]

Although Iranian reformers wanted to preserve the religious identity of the state and thus some of the political power of clerics, reformers believed that this power as constituted was too great, which was leading to abuses. Thus Khatami asserted that the government's power in Iran should be criticized and balanced because "too much power leads to corruption, even if those who hold power are good people."[18] To reformers, the best way to balance and criticize governmental power was to better respect democratic values and rights, including establishing the rule of law, creating checks and balances among all the branches of government, exhibiting greater tolerance of different political opinions, better protecting pluralism and minority rights, and subscribing to an evolving interpretation of the Quran.[19] Khatami described freedom as "the most sacred and most exciting value for humanity throughout history" and the "essence of growth and development." In a clear admonishment of conservatives, Iran's president asserted that freedom and pluralism should be respected even for those who wanted to reform the regime: "We do not have the right to accuse anyone who criticized [the state] of apostasy and blasphemy. Even if we succeeded in stopping criticism for a while, we will not be able to avoid the consequences of such an action."[20]

Consistent with the political reforms and objectives listed in the previous paragraph, key reformers rejected as illegitimate conservatives' belief in the absolute nature of the doctrine of *velayat-e faqih.* As the scholar Mehdi Moslem explains, reformers believed "that an all-encompassing *faqih* [an expert on Islamic jurisprudence, specifically the Supreme Leader in Iran] with unencumbered power is unconstitutional and could in fact lead to totalitarianism."[21] According to Khatami, it was only by implementing the major liberalizing reforms that were central to reformers' notion of religious democracy that "our country and our society will be saved and preserved."[22]

17. Ehteshami and Zweiri, *Iran and the Rise of the Neoconservatives*, p. 151.

18. Quoted in Litvak, "Iran," p. 297.

19. Moslem, *Factional Politics in Post-Khomeini Iran*, p. 132; Brumberg, *Reinventing Khomeini*, pp. 175–76; Ehteshami and Zweiri, *Iran and the Rise of the Neoconservatives*, p. xiv; Takeyh, *Hidden Iran,* p. 46.

20. All quotations from Litvak, "Iran," pp. 288–89.

21. Moslem, *Factional Politics in Post-Khomeini Iran*, p. 116; see also ibid., pp. 230, 246–47, 255–56; Takeyh, *Hidden Iran,* p. 49; Ehteshami and Zweiri, *Iran and the Rise of the Neoconservatives*, pp. 28, 30, 150.

22. Quoted in Litvak, "Iran," p. 277.

Given Iranian reformers' emphasis on civil rights and institutional checks on governmental power, it is not surprising that members of this group looked on elements of Western culture with admiration. Once again, this does not mean that reformers wanted to replicate Western regimes. Instead reformers asserted that they wanted to take what was "best" from Western ideology—chiefly the emphasis on the protection of individual liberty and minority rights and the institutions that helped achieve these goals, such as the separation of political powers, constitutionalism, and a thriving civil society—and unite it with Iranian culture's emphasis on personal virtue and piousness. Iranian reformers, in other words, hoped to get the freedom enjoyed in the West without its secularization and materialism. According to Moslem, reformers "orchestrated a concerted effort to infuse their conception of democracy, civil society, and its associated concepts into the religio-political discourse of the Islamic Republic by ideologically sanctioning—hence Islamicizing—Western-secular concepts."[23]

By advocating that Iran emulate core institutional and ideological elements from Western civilization, reformers were asserting that Iranian political culture was not antithetical to that found in the West, but instead had an affinity with it. These views were very different than those of Iranian conservatives, who viewed Western regimes as the ideological antithesis of their principles. For example, President Khatami claimed that the West has a "superb civilization." While Iran should neither imitate it "blindly" nor abandon Iran's "own identity," it should borrow the West's "good points" so as to "enrich our own culture." Unless Iran's leaders "correctly identify the positive and negative aspects of western civilization," Iran would not "develop" to the fullest extent possible.[24]

Importantly, Iranian reformers' admiration of Western ideology and the perceived need to borrow core institutional and normative aspects from it applied

23. Moslem, *Factional Politics in Post-Khomeini Iran*, p. 254; see also ibid., p. 131. Iranian conservatives agreed with this assessment that Iranian reformers were sympathetic to Western liberalism. One asserted in a 1995 interview that "the previously radical [Iranian] left now has liberal tendencies . . . Together with the modern right they do not place emphasis on *velayat-e faqih,* rather, their ideal [regime] is a Western one. From the definition of freedom to the basis of regime legitimacy to cultural matters, they think like the liberals" (quoted in ibid., p. 233). Nateq-Nuri argued that the Iranian people should not vote for reformers "who speak about the separation of religion and politics because their proposed model of government is a Western-style political system" (quoted in ibid., p. 232). Other conservatives denounced reformers' political objectives as "U.S.-style reforms" (quoted in Mark J. Gasiorowski, "The Power Struggle in Iran," *Middle East* Policy, Vol. 7, No. 4 [October 2000], p. 36). A 1995 editorial by the conservative paper *Resalat* asserted that reformers' belief that "an Islamic government is tantamount to true democracy and that true democracy means deputyship [i.e., constitutional restraints on the *faqih*] is nothing more than political liberalism" (quoted in Moslem, *Factional Politics in Post-Khomeini Iran*, p. 230).

24. Quoted in Menashri, *Post-Revolutionary Politics in* Iran, p. 186.

even to the United States. In fact, to some reformers the United States was especially worthy of respect and emulation. America is a free society with very high levels of technological and economic achievement, yet also very religious. In a January 1998 interview with CNN, President Khatami praised America because it was founded by puritans who "desired a system, which combined the worship of God with human dignity and freedom." "What [Iranians] seek is what the founders of American civilization" pursued. "This is why we sense an intellectual affinity with the essence of American civilization."[25]

Given Iranian reformers' and conservatives' very different ideological beliefs, it is not surprising that their relations were very hostile in both word and deed. Khatami, for example, called conservative critics "fascists."[26] Conservatives, in turn, labeled reformers as traitors to Iran, and often the worst kind of traitor at that: "agents" of the United States.[27] Supreme Leader Khamenei warned his followers soon after Khatami's election that "the enemy is striking Islam at home."[28] In the weeks leading up to Khatami's reelection in 2001, Ayatollah Yazdi damned reformers when he stated that "according to Koranic interpretation, these people who claim to be reformers are true examples of corrupters on Earth."[29] In 2005, Khamenei rejoiced in the election of the conservative Ahmadinejad, whose principles, unlike those of reformers, "are the same as . . . the revolution."[30]

If ideological distances are central to leaders' perceptions of threat and consequent international choices, then Iranian reformers' and conservatives' very different domestic principles should have led them to possess very different views and policies toward the United States. It is to this subject that I now turn my analysis.

25. "Transcript of Interview with Iranian President Mohammad Khatami," January 7, 1998, available at: http://www.cnn.com/WORLD/9801/07/iran/interview.html. Accessed November 15, 2011.

26. Quoted in "Khatami Voices Concern over Future of Iran, Condemns 'Fascism,'" Agence France Presse, August 5, 2003.

27. Shahram Chubin, *Whither Iran? Reform, Domestic Politics and National Security* (Oxford: The International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2002), p. 21; Gasiorowski, "The Power Struggle in Iran," pp. 31–32.

28. Quoted in Takeyh, *Hidden Iran,* p. 52.

29. Quoted in Ray Takeyh and Nikolas K. Gvosdev, *The Receding Shadow of the Prophet: The Rise and Fall of Radical Political Islam* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2004), p. 33.

30. Quoted in Suzanne Maloney, *Iran's Long Reach: Iran as a Pivotal State in the Muslim World* (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2008), p. 15. Although long viewed as ideological soul mates, Ahmadinejad and Khamenei had a major falling out in 2011 that left the former significantly weakened. The main cause of the split was a power struggle between the two conservative leaders and their followers, though the rift did have some ideological components. Ahmadinejad claimed that he could contact the Hidden Imam directly, which was a challenge to clerics' religious and political authority. See Robert F. Worth, "Iran's Power Struggle Goes Beyond Personalities to Future of Presidency Itself," *New York Times*, October 26, 2011.

## IDEOLOGY AND IRANIAN FOREIGN POLICIES

I ascertain the impact of Iranian leaders' ideological beliefs on their threat perceptions and consequent foreign policies by analyzing three different periods of time and issue areas, including Iranian leaders' interest in acquiring nuclear weapons and their responses to America's attacks on Afghanistan in 2001 and Iraq in 2003. I begin my analysis with an examination of U.S.-Iranian relations from 1997 to 2001. These years are particularly good ones to test the effects of ideological distances on Iranian leaders' perceptions and policies because multiple ideological factions possessed significant domestic power in this period, which resulted in variations in ideological distances in relation to the United States.

The five most important political bodies in Iran are the office of the Supreme Leader of the Revolution, the presidency, the parliament, the Council of Guardians, and the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC).[31] The Supreme Leader is by far the most powerful person in Iran. He is the commander of all military forces, and he appoints and dismisses the head of the judiciary, the president of state radio and television, and half of the members of the Council of Guardians (the head of the judiciary—another appointee of the Supreme Leader—proposes the remaining members of the Guardian Council, but these must be approved by parliament). The Supreme Leader also has a budget that is independent of the president and parliament, the size of which is unknown.

The president is Iran's second most powerful political figure. He appoints and dismisses ministers and controls the powerful Planning and Budget organization, which is important for establishing economic policy. The president is also the chairman of the National Security Council, which coordinates governmental activities involving defense, intelligence, and foreign policy.

Iran's parliament (Majles) has considerable power, especially by Middle Eastern standards. It is responsible, among other things, for drafting legislation, ratifying treaties, and approving the state budget. The Council of Guardians, however, has the power to veto parliamentary legislation that the Council's members judge to be incompatible with Islamic law. It can also reject candidates for any office who are deemed to be unsuitable based on a candidate's perceived Islamic convictions and loyalty to the regime.

The IRGC, which is Iran's most powerful military entity, has become increasingly active in political and economic affairs since the late 1990s. These activities have included the harassment and sometimes murder of ideological reformers, the management of Iran's nuclear capabilities, and overseeing

31. For details see Buchta, *Who Rules Iran?*, chs. 1–8.

industries and services that likely account for at least a quarter of Iran's economic output.[32]

Iranian conservatives have always controlled the Office of the Supreme Leader, the Guardian Council, and the IRGC. Reformers controlled the presidency from 1997 to 2005 and parliament from 2000 to 2004, both of which were historical firsts. Although Iranian conservatives always possessed more domestic power than reformers, this does not mean that the latter's power from 1997 to 2005 was inconsequential. As we shall see, reformers were able to influence policies in key ways, so much so that conservatives openly lamented the direction of Iranian decision making when reformers were at the zenith of their influence. Conservatives also openly rejoiced at reformers' parliamentary and presidential defeats in 2004 and 2005, precisely because they recognized that reformers were having an impact on policy that ran contrary to conservatives' preferences.[33] Indeed, so great was the perceived threat posed by reformers that key conservative leaders, including the Supreme Leader and IRGC commanders, were brought to the "conclusion that a counteroffensive was necessary for regime survival."[34] The result was a conservative consolidation in the 2000s as regime hard-liners further limited the power of the president in favor of the Supreme Leader and Revolutionary Guard.[35] Finally, even if reformers did not possess sufficient power to implement the policies they wanted, the fact that their perceptions and preferences differed from those of conservatives in major ways is a very important development for understanding the sources of Iranian international relations.

## Iranian-U.S. Relations, 1997–2001

Mohammad Khatami was elected president of Iran in 1997 on a reformist platform calling for the establishment of the rule of law, the better protection of civil and political liberties, and the creation of a more vibrant civil

32. For details, see Elliot Hen-Tov and Nathan Gonzalez, "The Militarization of Post-Khomeini Iran: Praetorianism 2.0," *Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 34, No. 1 (Winter 2011), pp. 45–59.

33. See Maximilian Terhalle, "Revolutionary Power and Socialization: Explaining the Persistence of Revolutionary Zeal in Iran's Foreign Policy," *Security Studies*, Vol. 18, No. 3 (July 2009), pp. 576–77.

34. Wehrey et al., *The Rise of the Pasdaran*, p. 83.

35. For details, see Gheissari and Nasr, "The Conservative Consolidation." Michael Slackman and Will Yong of *The New York Times* describe Ahmadinejad and his supporters as "hard-liners who deeply resented the relatively liberal reforms promoted by former President Mohammad Khatami. The post-election period has been defined by rolling back Mr. Khatami's policies and arresting, jailing, and demonizing his former aides and allies" ("A Year After Election, Iran's Divisions Have Hardened," *New York Times*, June 11, 2010).

society.[36] In his inaugural speech, Khatami asserted that "protecting the freedom of individuals and the rights of the nation . . . is a necessity deriving from the dignity of man in the divine religion . . . [This protection requires] provision of the necessary conditions for the realization of the constitutional liberties, strengthening and expanding the institutions of civil society . . . and preventing any violation of personal integrity, rights, and legal liberties."[37]

Consistent with these positions, Khatami's administration from its inception lowered the obstacles to registering NGOs and other civil institutions, and also significantly relaxed restrictions on the arts and the press.[38] Increased freedom for the press, reformers believed, would increase pressure for political liberalization.[39] Journals and papers discussed critically the most sensitive issues in Iranian politics, including relations with the United States, the Arab-Israeli peace process, and even the legitimate ideological and institutional foundations of the Iranian regime. The most important political victory for reformers in terms of domestic liberalization was the "reaffirmation of the parliament's prerogatives to scrutinize organizations under the Supreme Leaders' jurisdiction. This . . . empowered the elected representatives . . . to supervise previously unaccountable institutions such as the Ministry of Intelligence, the state broadcasting authority . . . and even . . . the armed forces."[40]

At the same time that Khatami was pushing for greater domestic liberalization, his government was also initiating major shifts in the tone and substance of actions toward the United States. Soon after being elected president, Khatami asserted that conflicts of interest were not inevitable with any country.[41] Instead of permanent enmity with the United States, Khatami asserted during his first press conference after being elected that

36. For an analysis of reformers' political platform see Takeyh and Gvosdev, *The Receding Shadow of the Prophet*, pp. 27–30.

37. Quoted in Said Amir Arjomand, "Civil Society and the Rule of Law in the Constitutional Politics of Iran Under Khatami," *Social Research*, Vol. 67, No. 2 (Summer 2000), p. 286.

38. Moslem, *Factional Politics in Post-Khomeini Iran*, p. 257; Jalil Roshandel, "Iran's Foreign and Security Policies: How the Decisionmaking Process Evolved," *Security Dialogue*, Vol. 31, No. 1 (March 2000), p. 112.

39. Maloney, *Iran's Long Reach*, p. 9; Ehteshami and Zweiri, *Iran and the Rise of the Neoconservatives*, pp. xvi, 2.

40. Takeyh and Gvosdev, *The Receding Shadow of the Prophet*, p. 30. Although Khatami's presidency did not immediately result in the passage of major political liberalizing legislation, because reformers did not control the Majles until 2000, after that year parliament passed bills designed to institutionalize greater freedoms. Most notably, in 2002 it passed bills that granted Iran's president more power at the expense of the non–popularly elected Supreme Leader and curtailed the Council of Guardians' ability to reject certain individuals from running for political office. Both bills were vetoed by the Council of Guardians.

41. Chubin, *Whither Iran?*, p. 25.

his foreign policies would be based on "détente" and "dialogue among civilizations."[42] This last reference implicitly challenged Samuel Huntington's clash-of-civilizations thesis that Muslim-majority and Western states were fundamentally antagonistic. In January 1998, the Iranian president expressed "regret" over Iran's taking hostage of U.S. citizens in 1979.[43] Khatami built on these statements by appointing to his cabinet a number of fellow reformers who openly advocated rapprochement with the United States.[44]

While calls for détente and dialogue may seem innocuous on the surface, these assertions were radical departures from previous Iranian positions (as well as the continued policies of ideological conservatives). Until then, Iran's key decision makers had viewed the United States as the embodiment of evil, for which normal relations, including even economic cooperation, were beyond the pale. According to a policy analyst in the Bill Clinton administration: "Iranians had not heard one of their leaders go out of his way to praise any aspect of the United States since 1979. It just was not done in revolutionary Iran . . . Khatami never employed any of the vituperative rhetoric about the United States that was the boilerplate of Iranian political discourse . . . The contrast between Khatami's statements and the vitriol still being heaped on the Untied States by [conservatives], particularly Khamene'i, could not have been greater."[45]

Khatami's public statements calling for rapprochement with the United States helped to break a long-standing taboo. For the first time since the revolution, debates on the appropriate nature of relations with America were on the front pages of newspapers and periodicals, and it became a subject that was widely discussed by Iranian citizens.

Another important development that implicated U.S.-Iranian relations were Khatami's and fellow reformers' statements on the Arab-Israeli conflict, which were just as revolutionary as calls for détente with the United States. To Iranian conservatives, relations between the Zionist regime and Islamic states could only be a state of war. As one conservative Iranian newspaper explained in 1999, Israel would be an enemy of Iran "under all circumstances." As long as a "Zionist regime exists [even] in part of Palestine," Iran's conflicts with it would continue.[46] In 2000, Supreme Leader Khamenei called for Israel's "annihilation," meaning that the Israeli regime

42. Quoted in Kenneth M. Pollack, *The Persian Puzzle: The Conflict between Iran and America* (New York: Random House, 2004), p. 314; also p. 315.

43. "Transcript of Interview with Iranian President Mohammad Khatami."

44. Pollack, *The Persian Puzzle*, pp. 313–14; Menashri, *Post-Revolutionary Politics in Iran*, pp. 88–90.

45. Pollack, *The Persian Puzzle*, pp. 315–16.

46. Quoted in Menashri, *Post-Revolutionary Politics in Iran*, p. 264.

should cease to exist and all of Palestine be returned to Palestinian control.[47] President Ahmadinejad reiterated this objective on a number of occasions. In 2005 he said that Israel should be "wiped off the map" and that the Holocaust was a "myth." A year later, Ahmadinejad stated that Israel was on the verge of "being eliminated."[48]

Because Iranian conservatives deny Israel's right to exist, they have consistently rejected the Arab-Israeli peace process. To conservatives, even the Palestinian people do not have the right to make peace with Israel. Thus when Yasser Arafat participated in peace talks with Israel in the 1990s, Khamenei condemned him as a traitor to Islam and promised to thwart the Oslo peace process through support of anti-Israeli forces, including Hamas and Hizbollah.[49] In 2005, Ahmadinejad stated that "anybody who takes a step toward Israel will burn in the fire of the Islamic nation's fury."[50]

Iranian reformers, as with conservatives, were staunch supporters of Palestinian rights and often scathing critics of Israel. In a 1997 statement, for example, Khatami called Israel the "main problem of the region," and America's support of it a danger to Muslims throughout the Middle East.[51] Reformers led by Khatami also joined with Iranian conservatives in supporting violent enemies of Israel, including Hamas and Hizbollah (though reformers' support of these groups was more ambiguous than conservatives'; more about this issue below).

Iranian reformers did, however, break from conservatives on a critical issue. Many reformist politicians adopted the revolutionary position for Iran of recognizing the legitimacy of Palestinian participation in peace talks with Israel. The foundation of these talks was a two-state solution to the conflict. With this change, Iranian reformers were recognizing Israel's right to exist. In December 1997, members of Khatami's government welcomed Arafat in Tehran and said that they would accept any outcome with Israel that was agreed to by the Palestinians.[52] Khatami publicly reiterated this position in his 1998 interview with CNN: "We don't intend to impose our views on others or to stand in their way. In our view all Palestinians have the

47. Quoted in Daniel Byman, Shahram Chubin, Jerrold Green, and Anoushiravan Ehteshami., *Iran's Security Policy in the Post-Revolutionary Era* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2001), p. 83.

48. All quoted in Nazila Fathi, "Iranian Leader Renews Attack on Israel at Palestinian Rally," *New York Times*, April 15, 2006.

49. Menashri, *Post-Revolutionary Politics in Iran*, p. 285; Shaul Bakhash, "Iran's Foreign Policy Under the Islamic Republic, 1979–2000," in L. Carl Brown, ed., *Diplomacy in the Middle East: International Relations of Regional and Outside Powers* (London, I. B. Tauris, 2001), p. 255.

50. Quoted in Takeyh, *Guardians of the Revolution*, p. 259.

51. Quoted in "Khatami Says Israel Biggest Problem for Syria and Iran," Associated Press Worldstream, August 1, 1997.

52. Madeleine Albright, "Strengthening U.S.-Asian Ties," speech delivered June 17, 1998, *U.S. Department of State Dispatch* (July 1998), p. 7.

right to express their views about their land . . . We seek a peace through which Jews, Muslims, and Christians . . . [can] freely determine their own destiny."[53] Khatami also gave a letter to Arafat in which he affirmed Israel's right to exist and the benefits to Iran of a comprehensive peace.[54] Some Iranian reformers also called for the normalization of relations with Israel once a peace treaty with the Palestinians was signed.[55]

Iranian reformers' different views than conservatives in these areas had important implications for American security interests. The U.S. is bound to be hostile to any state that openly threatens Israel's existence. Reformers' much less conflictual positions on this subject thus facilitated improvement in U.S.-Iranian relations.

Khatami's interest in détente and dialogue with the United States were not just words, as revolutionary as they were. He also backed up these statements with actions. Although none of these policy changes on their own represented a diplomatic bombshell—and although some of them remained ambiguous, especially to foreign observers—taken together they indicated an important shift in the direction of Iran's international relations that benefited American interests.

Soon after his election and throughout the following years, Khatami sent to meet with U.S. government officials dozens of people who were outside of his government but connected to it. The purpose of these contacts, according to one former American official who met with many of these envoys, was to relay the message "that real change was taking place in Iran and Khatami and those around him wanted to explore the possibility of beginning a process of rapprochement."[56]

As part of these informal talks, as well as in public statements, Khatami indicated that he and fellow reformers denounced terrorism. In his 1998 CNN interview, for example, the Iranian president stated that "terrorism should be condemned in all its forms and manifestations . . . Any form of killing of innocent men and women who are not involved in confrontations is terrorism; it must be condemned, and we . . . condemn every form of it in the world."[57]

53. "Transcript of Interview with Iranian President Mohammad Khatami."

54. Martin Indyk, *Innocent Abroad: An Intimate Account of American Peace Diplomacy in the Middle East* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2009), p. 221.

55. See Daniel Brumberg, "Dilemmas of Western Policies towards Iran," *International Spectator*, Vol. 3 (2002), p. 73; Hossein S. Seifzadeh, "The Landscape of Factional Politics and Its Future in Iran," *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 57, No. 1 (Winter 2003), pp. 72–73; Ray Takeyh, "Iranian Options: Pragmatic Mullahs and America's Interests," *The National Interest*, Vol. 73 (Fall 2003), p. 55.

56. Pollack, *The Persian Puzzle*, p. 317.

57. "Transcript of Interview with Iranian President Mohammad Khatami."

Iran's support of terrorist groups did decrease after Khatami was elected president in 1997 and reformers gained control of parliament in 2000.[58] Reductions in assassinations of enemies abroad and decreased aid to terrorists who were not involved in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict were the most pronounced changes in this period. Particularly important in this process was Khatami's 1999 dismissal of a number of ideological conservatives in the intelligence ministry who supported terrorist activities at home and abroad. The scholar Gary Sick summarizes these developments: "The most substantial changes in Iran's . . . policies and behavior [came] with Khatami's election . . . [His] vision of greater political liberty, civil society, and rule of law . . . changed the political discourse in Iran. His housecleaning of the Intelligence Ministry . . . may have significantly curtailed Iran's earlier tendency toward interventionism and feckless adventurism."[59]

With regards to policies toward terrorist groups operating in Palestine, however, reformers' policies were more ambiguous. On the one hand, Khatami met with representatives of Hamas and Islamic Jihad and may have promised them support.[60] On the other, some reformers claimed to oppose giving aid to these groups because they targeted Israeli civilians (many Iranian reformers argued, however, that support of Hizbollah did not contradict their opposition to terrorism, since this group primarily restricted its attacks to Israeli soldiers in Lebanon).[61] In 2002, reformers in parliament even demanded an investigation into Iranian conservatives' aid to terrorist organizations, including those operating in Palestine, implying that this support should stop.[62]

There were other actions that revealed Iranian reformers' interest in rapprochement with the United States. After Khatami's election, U.S. Navy commanders reported that "Iranian warships had started behaving professionally and even courteously to their American counterparts."[63] In early 1998, Iran stopped smugglers who were transporting Iraqi oil through Iranian waters. This was an important issue to the Americans and is one that they had repeatedly raised to Iran through a number of channels.[64] In September 1998, Khatami

58. Philip Shenon, "State Department Drops Iran as Terrorist Leader," *New York Times*, May 1, 1999; Chubin, *Whither Iran?*, pp. 89–91, 135 (note 14); Byman et al., *Iran's Security Policy in the Post-Revolutionary Era,* pp. 92–93; Takeyh, "Iranian Options," p. 55.

59. Gary Sick, "Iran: Confronting Terrorism," *Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 26, No. 4 (Autumn 2003), p. 93, also pp. 89–90.

60. Samii, "Tehran, Washington, and Terror," pp. 57–59.

61. Brumberg, "Dilemmas of Western Policies towards Iran," pp. 72–73.

62. Samii, "Tehran, Washington, and Terror," p. 65, note 65.

63. Pollack, *The Persian Puzzle*, p. 318.

64. The smuggling resumed when conservatives began to reassert their power in 1999 (Pollack, *The Persian Puzzle*, p. 319).

told the UN that his government would not carry out Ayatollah Khomeini's fatwa calling for the execution of the British author Salmon Rushdie. This change was a key step in convincing Western governments that Iran was not the zealous, dogmatic regime that it had been in the past.[65]

In the late 1990s, Khatami also began to improve substantially relations with Iran's neighbors, including restoring diplomatic and economic ties and initiating security and intelligence cooperation. As a central part of this process, Khatami—in clear contrast to his predecessors—did not insist that better relations with states in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) were contingent on these countries weakening their alliance commitments with the United States. This was a significant change. As Ray Takeyh explains, "the fact that Iran [under Khatami was] inclined to normalize relations with the GCC states despite their flourishing links to the United States [was] an indication that Tehran [was] willing to live in a Gulf whose balance of power [was] determined by America."[66]

Iranian ideological conservatives vehemently, sometimes violently, opposed these doctrinal and policy changes initiated by Khatami and fellow reformers. This fact further reveals the importance of these developments. If Khatami's words and deeds that pointed to improved relations with the United States had been either meaningless or made necessary by some systemic variable (e.g., Iran's economic troubles in the 1990s), opposition to them by other ideological factions in Iran likely would have been much lower.

Khamenei, for example, directly repudiated Khatami's statements that Iran was capable of having normal relations with the United States by warning against showing "the least sign of flexibility toward America."[67] The head of the judiciary, Ayatollah Shahroudi, similarly proclaimed in 2001 that Iran's "national interests lie with antagonizing the Great Satan."[68] Conservative newspapers also lambasted Khatami's reformist cabinet members for their lack of "hatred toward America."[69]

When Khatami praised Western civilization, Khamenei was quick to ridicule this position. According to the scholar of Iranian politics Daniel Brumberg: "With few exceptions, each time Khatami called for civilizational dialogue or 'Islamic civil society,' [Khamenei] retaliated with a hail of nativist ideological barbs."[70] Instead of recognizing Western liberalism's

65. Barbara Crossette, "Iran Drops Rushdie Death Threat, And Britain Renews Teheran Ties," *New York Times*, September 25, 1998.

66. Takeyh, "Iranian Options," p. 52.

67. Quoted in Pollack, *The Persian Puzzle*, p. 310.

68. Quoted in Pollack and Takeyh, "Taking on Tehran," p. 23.

69. Quoted in Pollack, *The Persian Puzzle*, p. 313.

70. Brumberg, *Reinventing Khomeini*, p. 240.

important accomplishments and some affinity with it as Khatami did, Khamenei rejected the West as a permanent, though doomed, enemy: "The West, with its comprehensive invasion, has . . . targeted our Islamic faith . . . [and] exported the . . . disregard for religion and ethics [that will] indubitably . . . engulf the present Western civilization and wipe it out."[71] Other dimensions of Khatami's policies—such as calls for increased economic cooperation with Western states, including the United States—were attacked with equal vitriol, as I detail later in this section.

Iranian conservatives' opposition to reformers' policies went beyond just rhetorical assaults, as harsh as they frequently were. Beginning soon after Khatami's election, conservatives and their supporters engaged in a widespread campaign of fear and intimidation to try to coerce reformers to change course. Conservatives in this period used their control of the legislature and judiciary to drive from office a number of Khatami's closest political allies.[72] In 1997, conservatives in the judiciary charged Gholam Hussein Karabaschi, who was mayor of Tehran as well as the principal organizer of Khatami's electoral victory, with corruption. In 1998, he was sentenced to five years in prison. In July and August 1997, six of Karabaschi's closest advisors were imprisoned. In the fall of 1997, three reformist district mayors were sentenced to prison terms, fines, and beatings. In June 1998, the Majles impeached Khatami's interior minister, Abdallah Nuri, largely for defending Karabaschi. In 1999, the judiciary put on trial reformist clerics who questioned the principle of theocratic rule. In 1998 and 1999, numerous reformers and their supporters were attacked, beaten, and sometimes murdered by conservative vigilantes. Included in these beatings were Vice President Nuri (who was appointed to this position by Khatami after Nuri's ouster as interior minister) and Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance Mohajerani. Many reformist newspapers were closed and their journalists and staffers arrested. Some were accused of such crimes as "fighting against God," which carried a death sentence. In 1998, 150 members of the Majles repudiated Khatami's earlier statement and instead confirmed that the fatwa calling for Salmon Rushdie's execution remained in effect.[73]

In 1998, the head of the Revolutionary Guards, Major General Rahim Safavi, stated that reformist clerics should be beheaded, and that his institution

71. Quoted in Brumberg, *Reinventing Khomeini*, p. 240.

72. The judiciary's consistent efforts to thwart Khatami's reforms led the president to angrily denounce this institution as one in the hands of "regressive and dogmatic clerics" (quoted in Arjomand, "Civil Society and the Rule of Law in the Constitutional Politics of Iran Under Khatami," p. 289).

73. On the preceding points, see Buchta, *Who Rules Iran?* pp. 139–55; Pollack, *The Persian Puzzle*, pp. 327–30; Arjomand, "Civil Society and the Rule of Law in the Constitutional Politics of Iran Under Khatami," p. 290.

would not hesitate to get involved in politics if "the foundations of our system of government and our revolution is [sic] threatened" by a "cultural plot" (i.e., the reformist agenda).[74] A year later Safavi and twenty-three other commanders of the IRGC wrote a letter to Khatami that made veiled references to a coup if the president did not take action to prevent the "values" of the regime from being "destroyed."[75] In 2003 Safavi wrote another letter, this time to the speaker of parliament, that repeated just how seriously he took the ideological threat posed by Iranian reformers. The missive warned that his organization was responsible for safeguarding "the ideology and values of Imam Khomeini," and that he would do whatever was necessary "to stop those who wish to destroy and overthrow the Islamic Revolution."[76]

The ideological differences between Iranian reformers and conservatives were responsible for these groups' different views of the United States and the resulting political firestorms described above. Just as Hypothesis 1 predicts, the huge ideological divide separating the United States from Iranian conservatives pushed the latter to see America as both an inevitable threat to Iran's security and a powerful force for domestic subversion. This does not mean that American power and various provocative policies (such as stationing troops throughout the Middle East and placing economic sanctions against Iran) did not exacerbate conservatives' perceptions of threat. They clearly did. But conservatives' understanding of the root cause of U.S.-Iranian enmity was based in ideological differences. To members of this faction, *U.S. leaders' ideological beliefs were the key factor that caused the Americans to adopt hostile policies toward Iran in the first place*. As Nateq-Nuri explained, Iran's "struggle against America has its origin in our ideology." Consequently, the United States by "its nature" was a permanent enemy of the IRI.[77] Supreme Leader Khamenei often made similar statements. In a 2003 speech, he claimed that "the primary reason for U.S. hostility toward our country is the Islamic identity of our system." Earlier in the year, he asserted that "it is natural that our Islamic system should be viewed as an enemy and an intolerable rival by . . . the United States . . . It is . . . clear that the conflict and confrontation between the two is something natural and unavoidable."[78] These views continued after Barack Obama became president. Khamenei declared in 2010 that the "change of behavior they [the Americans] want . . . is in fact a negation of our

74. Quoted in Ehteshami and Zweiri, *Iran and the Rise of the Neoconservatives*, p. 22.

75. Quoted in Ehteshami and Zweiri, *Iran and the Rise of the Neoconservatives*, p. 24.

76. Quoted in Houchang Hassan-Yari, "Iran: Defending the Islamic Revolution—The Corps of the Matter," Radio Free Europe, August 5, 2005, http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1060431.html. Accessed November 15, 2011.

77. Both quotations from Menashri, *Post-Revolutionary Politics in Iran*, p. 84.

78. Both quotations from Karim Sadjadpour, *Reading Khamenei: The World View of Iran's Most Powerful Leader* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2008), p. 15.

identity . . . Ours is a fundamental antagonism."[79] After an analysis of Khamenei's writings and statements, Ray Takeyh summarizes the Supreme Leader's views as follows: "For Khamenei, it was not Iran's behavior but its uncompromising embrace of an Islamist ideology that had provoked Washington's animus."[80]

Conservatives also repeatedly referred to the danger of "cultural onslaught" from the West, i.e., the spread to Iran of Western values such as materialism, secularism, and the separation of religion and politics. According to Khamenei, the West in general and the United States in particular "has targeted our Islamic faith and character." Western countries "intensively and persistently exported to our countries the culture of laxness and disregard for religion and ethics."[81] At the same time that Khatami was saying that Western ideology had much to commend it, Khamenei was blaming Western civilization for "directing everyone towards materialism while money, gluttony and carnal desires are made the greatest aspirations."[82] According to Nateq-Nuri, the West's "cultural onslaught" was attempting to destroy Iran's "ideology, religious thinking, national identity and religious values."[83] Secretary of the Guardian Council, Ayatollah Ahmad Jannati, was more succinct: "The enemy is trying to destroy our Islamic culture."[84]

To be clear, conservatives' fears of subversion were based on much more than a worry that ideas from one society would diffuse to another. Conservatives believed that the United States government was actively promoting its ideological principles in order to destroy the Islamic Republic. According to Khamenei, speaking in 2003, "more than Iran's enemies need artillery, guns and so forth, [American leaders] need to spread cultural values that lead to moral corruption." Three years earlier, the Supreme Leader had

79. Quoted in Kenneth M. Pollack and Ray Takeyh, "Doubling Down on Iran," *Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 34, No. 4 (Fall 2011), p. 10.

80. Takeyh, *Guardians of the Revolution*, p. 163. Self-serving domestic calculations likely played a part in generating conservatives' statements about America's permanent ideological hostility to Iran. These assertions and related policies helped fuel high levels of international tensions, which in turn helped justify political repression in Iran. Conservatives' private statements on this subject, though, were consistent with their public ones, which indicates that many truly believed in the ideological foundations of U.S.-Iranian enmity. Moreover, America's hostility with Iran was sometimes costly for conservatives' domestic interests because it provided reformers a key issue to criticize their political rivals, as I discuss below.

81. Quoted Menashri, *Post-Revolutionary Politics in Iran*, p. 214. See also Wehrey et al., *The Rise of the Pasdaran*, pp. 32, 37–38; Takeyh, *Guardians of the Revolution*, pp. 163, 225–26, 238, 240.

82. Quoted in Menashri, *Post-Revolutionary Politics in Iran*, p. 214.

83. Menashri, *Post-Revolutionary Politics in Iran*, p. 214; also p. 83.

84. Quoted in Moslem, *Factional Politics in Post-Khomeini Iran*, p. 109.

asserted: "I have now reached the conclusion that the United States has devised a comprehensive plan to subvert the Islamic system. This plan is an imitation of the plan that led to the collapse of the former Soviet Union."[85] This last statement came at a time when many analysts were comparing President Khatami and Iranian reformers to former Soviet Premier Mikhail Gorbachev and Soviet New Thinkers. Khamenei's remarks once again reveal his negative views of the former.

To prevent ideological subversion to Western principles, Iran, to conservatives, had to preserve its hostility toward the United States. Economic, diplomatic, or strategic interactions ran the risk of both legitimating American cultural values and corrupting pious Muslims to immoral ideological beliefs. For example, whereas many Iranian reformers pushed for economic cooperation with the United States as a means of improving Iran's economy, conservatives consistently rejected this course of action. To many conservatives, the risks of ideological contagion were more important than material gain. Conservatives lambasted those Iranians who advocated economic cooperation with America as dupes and U.S. agents whose policies would create fifth columns for Iran's ideological enemies. *Conservatives, in other words, viewed the United States as a major threat to their interests independently of America's "provocative" international policies* (unless one perceives economic cooperation as aggressive). Khamenei was scathing in his opposition to globalization and the "Westoxicated" elements in Iran that supported it: "Audio and visual waves, which are worse than warplanes, are being used to disseminate a rogue culture aimed at reasserting the domination of the enemies of Islam, paving the way for the imposition of unethical values and Westernized ideas to captivate and humiliate Muslims."[86] Mohsen Kadivar, a senior reformist cleric, summed up the conservatives' position: "When the West threatens isolation, [conservatives] welcome it. They cannot integrate. They feel if Iran integrated it would lose its Islamic identity."[87]

Iranian reformers' more liberal ideological beliefs and the resulting reduction in the ideological distance dividing them from the United States gave them significantly lower threat perceptions than conservatives. If Western ideology was to a significant extent to be admired and emulated, as reformers claimed, interaction with the United States was not nearly as dangerous to Iranian interests as conservatives asserted. In fact, since reformers' goal was to "borrow" from the West its "best" ideological elements

85. Both quotations from Sadjadpour, *Reading Khamenei*, pp. 17 and 18, respectively.

86. Quoted in Chubin, *Whither Iran?*, p. 24. See also Menashri, *Post-Revolutionary Politics in Iran*, pp. 83, 108; Moslem, *Factional Politics in Post-Khomeini Iran*, pp. 196, 200.

87. Quoted in Michael Slackman, "If America Wanted to Talk, Iran Would," *New York Times*, September 3, 2006.

so that Iran could reach the highest political, economic, and moral development possible, interaction with the United States *was to be encouraged, not avoided*. Hence reformers' interest in economic cooperation, political negotiations, and cultural exchanges with Western countries, including the United States. The scholar Anoushiravan Ehteshami succinctly expresses this point: "For many of the reformists . . . restoration of relations with the United States is vital for renewal at home."[88] International rapprochement, in short, could facilitate domestic liberalization.

Cooperation with the United States as a key means of spurring political and economic liberalization in Iran was the outcome that Iranian conservatives most feared. Their fierce attacks against reformers were therefore inevitable. As Daniel Brumberg explains, "knowing that the reformists' support of normalisation [of relations with the United States] is organically linked to their quest for freedom and democracy, [conservatives were] determined to ensure their ultimate control over the debate on US-Iranian relations."[89] Whereas Iranian reformers' more liberal ideological beliefs pushed them to see the United States as both a manageable external threat (thus making "normal" relations possible) and a potential support to their domestic interests, conservatives believed the opposite. There was thus a clear relationship between the degree of ideological differences dividing states' leaders and their perceptions of threats to both their international and domestic interests, just as Hypothesis 1 predicts. The very same actions (e.g., economic relations with the United States) were viewed in very different ways depending on ideological beliefs.

## Iranian Politics and Nuclear Weapons, 1997–2009

The potential acquisition of nuclear weapons by Iran was a highly contentious international issue from 1997 to 2009, and it continues to be so at the time of writing. America's leaders in both the Clinton and Bush administrations stated that this outcome was unacceptable and indicated that they were willing to use force to prevent it.

The best chance of resolving this dispute was rooted in Iranian domestic politics. Iranian leaders did not possess a monolithic view of the benefits and costs of nuclear weapons. Instead, there was and continues to be an

88. Anoushiravan Ehteshami, "Iran's International Posture after the Fall of Baghdad," *The Middle East Journal*, Vol. 58, No. 2 (Spring 2004), p. 183; also Ali M. Ansari, *Iran, Islam and Democracy: The Politics of Managing Change* (London: Royal Institute of International Affairs, 2000), p. 131.

89. Brumberg, "Dilemmas of Western Policies towards Iran," p. 74.

intense debate over the issue that largely corresponded with politicians' ideological beliefs. Although the correlation was not perfect, it was nevertheless strong. According to a leading authority on Iran's nuclear program writing in 2006, "Differences [on the nuclear issue] do not fall strictly along factional lines but nearly so."[90]

The majority of Iranian conservatives were highly motivated to develop nuclear weapons, reformers much less so. The principal cause of this variation is consistent with the book's argument. Different ideological beliefs—and thus variations in ideological distances—gave Iranian leaders different understandings of the level of threats to Iran's interests posed by other countries, including the United States. These variations in threat perceptions, in turn, resulted in different levels of urgency to develop nuclear weapons. Arguments that look to either Iran's relative power position or American policies cannot explain these partisan differences on such a critical issue.

### *Conservatives' Views*

Iranian conservatives were and remain for the most part forceful advocates for the development of Iran's nuclear weapons program.[91] Their primary motivation was the perception that other countries, especially the United States, were grave threats to Iran's security. To conservatives, the world is "a Hobbesian one of unremitting struggle, where predatory powers lurk to dictate and dominate and where the only currency is military power. Power, in this view, is the indispensable element for survival."[92] To Iranian conservatives, in other words, nuclear weapons would be a significant aid to Iran's safety in the face of mortal enemies. According to Ali Ardashir Larijani

90. Chubin, *Iran's Nuclear Ambitions*, p. 29. See also Fatemeh Haghighatjoo, "Factional Positions on the Nuclear Issue in the Context of Iranian Domestic Politics," *Iran Analysis Quarterly*, Vol. 3, No. 1 (January–March 2006), pp. 2–10; Nader Entessar, "Iran's Nuclear Decision-Making Calculus," *Middle East Policy*, Vol. 16, No. 2 (Summer 2009), pp. 32–33; Takeyh, *Hidden Iran*, p. 146. Key Iranian leaders have confirmed this position. According to Hassan Rowhani, who was secretary of the Supreme Council on National Security, the top decision-making body on security issues in Iran (speaking in 2005): "Divisions and disagreements [among Iran's elite on the nuclear issue] are far wider and deeper than what the ordinary members of the public can see." These differences are a product of disagreements over "certain fundamental issues and premises" (quoted in Shahram Chubin, "Iran: Domestic Politics and Nuclear Choices," in Ashley J. Tellis and Michael Wills, *Domestic Political Change and Grand Strategy* [Seattle: The National Bureau of Asian Research, 2007], p. 318). While Rowhani did not explicitly mention ideology as the key cause of these disagreements, this is the most likely candidate.

91. Karl Vick, "Iranian Hard-liners Wary of Nuclear Deal," *Washington Post*, November 20, 2003; Chubin, *Iran's Nuclear Ambitions*, pp. 29–32, 56, 58; Takeyh, *Guardians of the Revolution*, pp. 248–49.

92. Chubin, *Iran's Nuclear Ambitions*, p. 33.

(who was appointed by Ahmadinejad to be Secretary of the Supreme National Security Council and was Iran's top negotiator on issues of national security), in order to protect Iran from foreign threats "you have to find a way to be able to take the country's level and status to a point so as to automatically solve your national security problem, otherwise this pressure factor will always weigh on you. . . . If Iran becomes atomic Iran, no longer will anyone dare to challenge it."[93] In November 2004, the conservative newspaper and mouthpiece for the supreme leader, *Jumhuri-ye Islami*, similarly claimed that "it is obvious that having access to advanced weapons shall cause deterrence and therefore security, and will neutralize the evil wishes of great powers to attack."[94]

Most Iranian conservatives rejected various arguments against the acquisition of nuclear weapons, including claims that these armaments might diminish Iran's security by provoking other countries, especially the United States, into adopting aggressive policies to prevent this outcome. Conservatives' ideological enmity with the United States led them to believe that America would be hostile to Iran no matter what policies it adopted on the nuclear issue. Members of this ideological faction viewed U.S. leaders' hostility to Iran's nuclear program as only an excuse that the Americans were using to force ideological change. According to Khamenei speaking in 2003, "what the United States, which has been spearheading the aggression against our Islamic revolution, expects from our nation and government is submission and surrender to its hegemony, and this is the real motive for U.S. claims regarding weapons of mass destruction, human rights or democracy."[95]

Conservatives believed that even if Iran abandoned its nuclear program, American pressure would continue because, according to Army Commander Mohammed Salimi, "the enemies of Iran are bent on changing the regime in Iran."[96] In 2008, President Ahmadinejad stated that "the American government has been against our people for 30 years. They always find an excuse. When the nuclear issue was not on the agenda, they had imposed an embargo on false pretexts. The nuclear issue is only an excuse for the U.S. administration to display its bad intentions against our people."[97]

93. Quoted in Chubin, *Iran's Nuclear Ambitions*, p. 33.

94. Quoted in Colin Dueck and Ray Takeyh, "Iran's Nuclear Challenge," *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 122, No. 2 (2007), p. 193. See also Haghighatjoo, "Factional Positions on the Nuclear Issue in the Context of Iranian Domestic Politics," pp. 4–5.

95. Quoted in Sadjadpour, *Reading Khamenei*, p. 14.

96. Quoted in Chubin, *Iran's Nuclear Ambitions*, p. 76.

97. Quoted in "Turkish, Iranian Presidents Want Diplomatic Solution of Iran's Nuclear Issue," BBC Monitoring Europe, August 15, 2008.

Iranian conservatives, in other words, tended not to view conflict with the United States as a product of the "security dilemma" (a realist concept that refers to the action-reaction cycle in which states' attempts to make themselves feel safe frighten others into adopting power-augmenting policies that are often perceived as aggressive). If Iran and America were caught in a security dilemma, hostilities between the two states could be reduced if each adopted more reassuring policies. Iranian conservatives instead saw conflict with the United States as inevitable as long as the huge ideological gap dividing the two countries existed. Given these perceptions of implacable U.S. enmity, conservatives saw little reason for Iran not to develop nuclear weapons. As one Iranian reformer explained: "If they [Iranian conservatives] think they are going to be damned either way [whether or not Iran develops WMDs] they might as well do as they please [and acquire these weapons]."[98]

Some ideological conservatives also tended to be indifferent to the economic costs that foreign powers might impose on Iran to inhibit its nuclear ambitions. Indeed, some conservatives *welcomed* economic sanctions imposed by Western countries and high levels of international tensions, since these developments increased "the opportunity to purify the regime and society by limiting contamination from the outside and asserting the revolution's values of self-reliance and authenticity."[99] These conservatives viewed economic sanctions as beneficial because they decreased the likelihood of ideological subversion by Western values. Furthermore, high levels of international tensions both supported conservatives' assertions that the Western powers were Iran's enemies and justified the need for continued domestic oppression in order to deal with external threats.

In sum, many Iranian conservatives' understandings of the substantial benefits and relatively low costs associated with the acquisition of nuclear weapons created strong incentives to acquire them. Conservatives' ideological beliefs caused them to view the United States as an inevitable enemy that only sufficient power could deter. Thus the benefits of acquiring nuclear weapons were extremely high. Conservatives' fears of ideological subversion also pushed some to favor diplomatic and economic isolation from Western states, which in turn inclined them to see many of the likely penalties associated with their nuclear ambitions as not terribly costly, if they were perceived as costly at all. Moreover, because Iranian conservatives

98. Quoted in International Crisis Group, Middle East Report No. 18, *Dealing with Iran's Nuclear Program* (Amman/Brussels, October 27, 2003), p. 17.

99. Chubin, *Iran's Nuclear Ambitions*, p. 34; also Ray Takeyh, "Iran Builds the Bomb," *Survival*, Vol. 46, No. 4 (Winter 2004–05), p. 56.

believed that ideology was pushing U.S. leaders to be hostile to Iran regardless of the latter's policies, developing nuclear weapons would not significantly add to Iran's security problems. This fact further reduced the potential costs of this decision in conservatives' minds. Given these views, the odds of the United States and its allies being able to induce most Iranian conservatives to abandon their nuclear ambitions were and remain low.

### *Reformers' Views*

Iranian reformers possessed significantly different views of nuclear weapons than did conservatives. Most importantly, many members of this faction advocated that Iran *not* develop these weapons, at least if this outcome meant sacrificing what they deemed to be more important objectives.

In the first place, many reformers (especially from the "modern right" parties) believed both that economic development and industrialization should be among Iran's foremost political objectives, and that economic cooperation with the Western powers was indispensable for realizing these goals. Reformers understood that developing nuclear weapons would be doubly detrimental to these ends. The U.S. and its allies would likely respond to an Iranian nuclear weapons program by both increasing the level of economic sanctions directed at Iran and rescinding any positive economic inducements—such as lifting existing sanctions and supporting Iran's candidacy to join the World Trade Organization (WTO)—that these countries had offered Iran to entice its leaders to not acquire these armaments.

Reformers, like conservatives, did view the development of nuclear technology as potentially benefiting Iran's interests. However, whereas conservatives saw nuclear weapons primarily as a means of protecting Iran from its foremost ideological enemy, reformers often viewed these armaments as a means of leveraging more economic assistance from vital economic partners. Consequently, most reformers believed that Iran's nuclear weapons program should be sacrificed for the right economic price, which is a view that most conservatives rejected.[100] Reformers, in sum, did "not wish to see . . . [the] pursuit [of nuclear weapons to] lead to Iran's estrangement from the international community and hurt relations with neighbors."[101] Ray Takeyh, for example, states that "in contrast to the hardliners, the pragmatic elements within the Islamic Republic's officialdom insist that

100. See International Crisis Group, *Dealing with Iran's Nuclear Program*, p. 16; Haghighatjoo, "Factional Positions on the Nuclear Issue in the Context of Iranian Domestic Politics," pp. 3, 9.

101. Chubin, *Iran's Nuclear Ambitions*, p. 31.

Iran's on-going integration into the international order and the global economy mandates accepting certain restrictions on its nuclear programme."[102] Or according to Shahram Chubin, pragmatists "seek [nuclear] power to be able to cut a deal and normalize relations [with other states], whereas the *ideological conservatives* shun a deal and want power to be able to impose themselves on the region and beyond."[103]

Notice that these scholars contrast "ideological conservatives" and "hardliners" with "pragmatists" instead of the dichotomy of "conservatives" versus "reformers" that I employ. These other comparisons are designed to reflect the fact that Iranian leaders' positions on the nuclear issue did not perfectly align with factional-ideological beliefs. Most notably, some ideological conservatives were willing to join reformers and compromise on this issue in order both to receive economic rewards and avoid increasing hostilities with the Western powers. Importantly, even the very conservative Supreme Leader Khamenei appeared willing, at least when under significant international and domestic pressure, to compromise on this issue, as I discuss more fully in the next section. These pragmatic conservatives, however, were largely exceptions that proved the rule. The majority of Iranian ideological reformers were much more willing to compromise on the nuclear weapons issue than were most conservatives.[104]

Reinforcing reformers' economic justifications for not developing nuclear weapons were these politicians' understandings of the most effective means of protecting Iran's security. Iranian reformers agreed with conservatives that Iran should be free of foreign intimidation and interference in Iran's internal affairs. In order to achieve these goals, however, reformers placed much greater emphasis than did conservatives on adopting reassuring, cooperative policies, including with regard to nuclear weapons.

For example, during Khatami's informal talks with U.S. leaders after his election in 1997, his representatives relayed to the Americans that Khatami "understood [America's] concerns" about Iran's WMD programs and that he and fellow reformers were willing to be "accommodating" on this issue.[105] Publicly, the president asserted that while Iran had the right to

102. Takeyh, "Iran Builds the Bomb," p. 56.

103. Chubin, *Iran's Nuclear Ambitions*, p. 32; emphasis in original. See also Chubin, "Iran," pp. 301, 305, 318–19; Pollack, *The Persian Puzzle*, pp. 378–79.

104. As a report issued by the International Crisis Group puts it, while "most" reformers were willing to compromise on the nuclear issue in a way that satisfied Western states' concerns, only "a number" of conservatives were willing to do so (International Crisis Group, *Dealing with Iran's Nuclear Program*, p. 16).

105. Quoted in Pollack, *The Persian Puzzle*, p. 318.

develop nuclear energy, the international community has "the right to be assured that [this technology will] be channeled in the right way."[106] Fatemeh Haghighatjoo, a reformist parliamentarian, expressed reformers' position on the nuclear issue in a 2005 statement: "Reformists believe that the insistence on the [nuclear weapons] program will create international reactions that in the long-term will result in distrust by the international community." Thus they "see the move toward uranium enrichment for the purpose of acquiring nuclear weapons as a danger for the country . . . Therefore, subject to the provision of economic incentives that allow for Iran's development, the reformists believe that uranium enrichment should come to a halt. Rather, the government should base its legitimacy on the people's votes, and make every effort to gain the trust of the international community."[107] President Khatami, reformers in parliament, and reformist newspapers, while insisting that Iran had the right to develop a civilian nuclear program, all stated that if Iran did not adopt reassuring policies, such as allowing international inspectors to examine Iran's nuclear facilities, foreigners would be justified in thinking that Iran's intentions were not peaceful.[108]

Reformers' calls for accommodating policies on the nuclear issue resulted from these individuals' ideological relationships with other states. As Shahram Chubin explains, "the reform faction [did] not have the same sense of

106. Quoted in Shahram Chubin and Robert S. Litwak, "Debating Iran's Nuclear Aspirations," *The Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 26, No. 4 (Autumn 2003), p. 105.

107. Haghighatjoo, "Factional Positions on the Nuclear Issue in the Context of Iranian Domestic Politics," pp. 2–3.

108. Chubin and Litwak, "Debating Iran's Nuclear Aspirations," p. 105. These views continued after reformers no longer controlled the presidency or parliament. According to a statement released by Iranian reformers in the summer of 2009, "The Iranian Green Movement [i.e., reformers] does not want a nuclear bomb, but instead desires peace for the world and democracy for Iran . . . The Green Movement in Iran furthermore understands the world's concerns [about Iran's nuclear program] and in fact has similar concerns itself." *Los Angeles Times* journalists summarize the meaning of this and similar reformist statements, as well as interviews with reformers, as follows: "[Iran's nuclear weapons program] is now intensifying the differences between political reformers, who increasingly want to engage the West, and the hard-liners who for years have resisted what they regard as international meddling" (both quotations from Jeffrey Fleishman and Ramin Mostaghim, "Disclosure of Secret Nuclear Plant Further Divides Iran's Hard-liners, Opposition," *Los Angeles Times*, September 27, 2009). Indeed, a key reason why the crackdown on reformist protesters after the fraudulent 2009 presidential elections was so fierce was because Iranian conservatives were threatened by reformers' domestic and international policy objectives. According to an Iranian analyst on the scenes of the protests, Iran's Revolutionary Guards and other conservative leaders "feel very much threatened by the reformist movement. They feel that the reformists will open up to the West and be lenient on the nuclear issue. It is a confrontation of two ways of thinking, the revolutionary and the internationalist" (quoted in Bill Keller and Michael Slackman, "Leader Emerges with Stronger Hand," *New York Times*, June 15, 2009).

[international] embattlement as their conservative counterpart." "Where [reformers differed] from the conservatives [was] in their view of foreign policy generally, specifically with reference to the value of détente, dialogue and cooperative security. Lacking a sense of [ideological] mission, and *having a different conception of what Iran represents (a democratic republic as well as an Islamic one)* the reformists [saw] interdependence and engagement [with the West] as desirable (and inevitable)."[109] Iranian reformers' affinity with core ideological attributes of Western states, in other words, pushed these individuals to see the danger from these powers as much lower than did conservatives, as Hypothesis 1 predicts. This reduced threat perception allowed reformers to advocate reassuring policies and security cooperation to protect Iran's safety, rather than having to rely on the power of nuclear weapons and deterrent threats as conservatives prescribed.

Skeptics might dismiss reformers' statements that indicated a willingness to be accommodating on the nuclear issue as strategic rhetoric designed to fool foreign leaders about Iran's true intentions. By putting forth cooperative appearances, Iranian leaders may have been simply buying time to develop nuclear weapons until they ultimately could present the world with a nuclear fait accompli, much as North Korea did in the 1990s and early 2000s.

There is important evidence that potentially supports this interpretation of Iranian policies. Most notably, Iran's nuclear weapons program appears to have accelerated in 1999—two years after Khatami became president—and continued after reformers gained control of parliament in 2000.[110]

Whether the continued development of nuclear weapons in Iran even at the height of reformers' domestic power resulted from this group's interest in developing these armaments despite public statements to the contrary or from conservatives' continued political dominance despite reformers' control of the presidency and parliament from 2000 to 2004 is unclear. We do not know enough about the internal workings of Iranian politics to answer this question. What is clear, though, is that once Iran's clandestine nuclear weapons program became public in 2002, leaders from Iran's various political factions responded quite differently. Whereas most conservatives advocated that Iran continue with its nuclear plans even in the face of international opposition, reformers advocated and adopted policies that were designed to address Western states' security fears. In other words, reformers may have been willing to support the development of nuclear weapons as long as this choice did not cause a crisis with other states that forced Iran to accept trade-offs to acquire these armaments. When this condition was no

109. Chubin, *Whither Iran?*, pp. 69, 84 respectively, emphasis added.
110. Chubin, *Iran's Nuclear Ambitions*, p. 8; Pollack, *The Persian Puzzle*, p. 362.

longer met, however, reformers retreated in costly ways, including suspending uranium enrichment, allowing international inspectors to examine Iran's nuclear sites, and even offering to terminate its nuclear weapons program in exchange for concessions from America (I discuss these proposals in greater detail in the next section). In sum, *when forced to make a choice*, cooperation with the Western powers was more important to most reformers than acquiring nuclear weapons.

For example, when it became publicly known in 2002 that Iran had secretly invested billions of dollars to build facilities that might produce fissile material for nuclear weapons, Khatami's government took a number of important steps to reassure Western states of Iran's intentions.[111] In October 2003, Khatami signed an agreement with France, Britain, and Germany (the "EU-3") to suspend uranium enrichment. In December 2003, the president signed the "Additional Protocol" to the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), which allowed for short-notice international inspections of Iran's nuclear facilities. In November 2004, the Iranian government signed the "Paris Agreement," which renewed its commitment to continue the suspension of uranium enrichment and related activities.[112]

After these developments, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) was able to declare that there was no evidence of an Iranian nuclear weapons program. Similarly, in a report issued in March 2005, Mohammad ElBaradei (the director general of the IAEA) stated that no new evidence of illicit nuclear activities had been discovered, and that Iran, to the best of the IAEA's knowledge, was in compliance with the Paris agreement (ElBaradei did, however, express a suspicion at this time that Iran might not be fully cooperating with his agency's inspections).[113] In November 2007, the U.S. government issued a National Intelligence Estimate that stated that "we judge with high confidence that in fall 2003, Tehran halted its nuclear weapons program."[114]

111. These policies were strongly opposed by many Iranian conservatives. See Vick, "Iranian Hard-liners Wary of Nuclear Deal;" and Mehran Kamrava, "Iranian National-Security Debates: Factionalism and Lost Opportunities," *Middle East Policy*, Vol. 14, No. 2 (Summer 2007), pp. 84–100. For details on Iran's covert nuclear weapons program, which was made public in 2002, see International Crisis Group, *Dealing with Iran's Nuclear Program*.

112. Chubin, *Iran's Nuclear Ambitions*, pp. xiv–xx; International Crisis Group, *Dealing with Iran's Nuclear Program*.

113. Chubin, *Iran's Nuclear Ambitions*, pp. xiv–xx.

114. The document defined "nuclear weapons program" as "Iran's nuclear weapon design and weaponization work and covert uranium conversion-related and uranium enrichment-related work; we do not mean Iran's declared civil work related to uranium conversion and enrichment." See National Intelligence Estimate, "Iran: Nuclear Intentions and Capabilities," November 2007, http://www.dni.gov/press_releases/20071203_release.pdf. Accessed November 15, 2011. Other analysts, including some in the Bush and Barack Obama administrations and the IAEA, questioned the accuracy of these assessments. See David E. Sanger and William J. Broad, "IAEA Suspects Iranian Nuclear Weapons Activity," *New York Times*, February 19, 2010.

The claim that ideological reformers were genuinely committed to trying to reassure the West of Iran's nuclear intentions is supported by how quickly many of their policies were reversed after the election of the conservative Ahmadinejad to the presidency in place of Khatami. Ahmadinejad was inaugurated on August 6, 2005. Within two days of this leadership change, Iran reneged on its commitments in the Paris Agreement and Additional Protocol. On August 8, the Esfahan nuclear facility resumed the conversion of uranium yellowcake into uranium hexafluoride, a gas that is necessary for making nuclear fuel.[115] In January 2006, Iran removed IAEA seals from enrichment sites. In February 2006, the IAEA Board of Governors referred Iran to the UN Security Council to begin discussions on imposing economic sanctions.[116]

Further corroborating the claim that reformers were genuinely interested in reaching a compromise with the United States and its allies on the development of nuclear technology is that according to virtually all accounts, the domestic battles between Iranian ideological conservatives and reformers on this issue were extremely contentious. If these groups in actuality agreed on the need to acquire nuclear weapons, and reformers' statements and actions indicating otherwise were only Trojan horses designed to lull foreign powers into a sense of complacency until Iran could present the world with a nuclear fait accompli, domestic infighting on this issue would have been much lower. Instead, politicians publicly and privately attacked one another for their positions on Iran's nuclear program (conservatives' complaints and rebukes of reformers' actions also show that the latter were having an important impact on policy, despite conservatives' greater domestic power).[117] For example, in April 1998 the Commander of the IRGC, Yahya Rahim Safavi, gave to his officers a private speech that was subsequently leaked. In it, he criticized the direction of Iran's foreign policies, including its nuclear program, under President Khatami: "Can we withstand America's threats and domineering attitude with a policy of détente? Can we foil dangers coming from America through dialogue of civilizations? Will we be able to protect the Islamic Republic from international Zionism by signing conventions banning the proliferation of chemical and nuclear weapons?"[118] Similarly, in November 2004 former IRGC

115. Jenny Booth, "Iran Nuclear Plant Restarts Processing Uranium," *Times Online*, August 8, 2005.

116. Chubin, *Iran's Nuclear Ambitions*, pp. xviii–xx.

117. Chubin and Litwak, "Debating Iran's Nuclear Aspirations," p. 105; Chubin, *Iran's Nuclear Ambitions*, pp. 29–30.

118. Quoted in Farideh Farhi, "To Have or Not to Have? Iran's Domestic Debate on Nuclear Options," in Geoffrey Kemp ed., *Iran's Nuclear Weapons Options: Issues and Analysis* (Washington, DC: The Nixon Center, 2001), pp. 35–36.

commander Mohsen Rezai condemned Khatami's cooperation with international inspectors and "turning over our country's top intelligence documents" (as stipulated by the Paris Agreement and Additional Protocol).[119] To Rezai, Iran's security would have been better served by trying to scare and intimidate the West with the power that Iran might have rather than providing reassurances about the weapons it lacked. In April 2005, *Jumhuriye Islami* harshly criticized reformers' views of the United States and their resulting nuclear policies: "The core problem is the fact that our officials' outlook on the nuclear dossier of Iran is faulty and they are on the wrong track. It seems they have failed to appreciate that America is after our destruction and the nuclear issue is merely an excuse for them."[120] Khamenei also frequently criticized the reformist-led sixth parliament (2000–04) for being "pro-American" and "radical" in ways that were "contrary to many of the regime's interests." The supreme leader, in contrast, openly praised the conservative-dominated seventh parliament (2004–08). According to Khamenei, the seventh parliament, unlike "the previous term, really stood firm on the nuclear issue." Major General Hassan Firouzabadi, the chief of staff of the armed forces, warned before the 2008 parliamentary elections that reformers "must not be allowed to find their way into the Majles again and to repeat their past performance," since reformers do "nothing but fulfill U.S. interests . . . Has the Iranian nation not already tasted this bitter shame once?"[121]

The preceding statements reveal Iranian conservatives' and reformers' very different understandings of the nature of the threat posed by the United States and how to address it. If reformers led by Khatami were not genuinely interested in nuclear arms control as part of overall negotiations with the United States, there would have been no need for conservatives to complain so bitterly about the direction of Iran's foreign policies, including

119. Quoted in Chubin, *Iran's Nuclear Ambitions*, p. 56; see also Vick, "Iranian Hard-liners Wary of Nuclear Deal."

120. Quoted in Dueck and Takeyh, "Iran's Nuclear Challenge," p. 195. See also Wehrey et al., *The Rise of the Pasdaran*, p. 87.

121. Khamenei's and Firouzabadi's quotations are from Akbar Ganji, "The Latter-Day Sultan: Power and Politics in Iran," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 87, No. 6 (November/December 2008), pp. 52, 64, 58, respectively. Khamenei also praised Ahmadinejad in comparison to Khatami. In 2009, the Supreme Leader lauded Ahmadinejad's domestic and international policies. Ahmadinejad, according to Khamenei, helped keep "alive the Khomeini legacy" by fighting against "encroaching secularism and Westernization" that had recently threatened to poison Iran (i.e., during Khatami's presidency). Ahmadinejad also stood firm against the West, unlike his predecessor who wanted to submit to the West's "hegemonic designs" (quoted in Abbas Milani, "Obama's Existential Challenge to Ahmadinejad," *Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 32, No. 2 [April 2009], pp. 70–71).

its weapons programs. Instead, different ideological distances dividing various Iranian policymakers from their American counterparts resulted in significantly different international preferences for Iran's core security policies.

## Iranian Politics and America's "War on Terror"

Iran's ideological factions exhibited key differences on another set of critical international developments during the period under examination: America's reaction to the September 11 terrorist attacks, including the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. Once again, ideological reformers were fairly cooperative on these subjects, while conservatives frequently tried to thwart U.S. objectives. Because different ideological groups in Iran advocated very different policies, Iranian international relations toward America from 2001 to 2009 were marked with inconsistencies, mixed signals, and abrupt changes in policies.

### *Reformers' Views and Policies*

Khatami's government was one of the first in the world to condemn the September 11 terrorist attacks. Within hours of the event, Khatami (and other reformers) forcefully denounced them: "I condemn the terrorist operations of hijacking and attacking public places in American cities, which have resulted in the death of a large number of defenseless American people."[122]

Iranian reformers' support for the United States after 9/11 was not just rhetoric. According to one expert who served as an advisor to both the Iranian parliament and foreign ministry, after 9/11 "Khatami advocated vigorously in the Iranian policymaking establishment for a more open policy towards the United States." He was so forceful that "apparently, the Supreme Leader and some other [conservative leaders acquiesced and] were initially willing to give the go-ahead to him, basically taking a wait-and-see attitude."[123]

122. Quoted in Mohammad Ayatollahi Tabaar, "The Beloved Great Satan: The Portrayal of the U.S. in the Iranian Media Since 9/11," *Journal of European Society for Iranian Studies*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (Winter 2005), p. 66; also Seifzadeh, "The Landscape of Factional Politics and Its Future in Iran," p. 69.

123. Quoted in Kamal Nazer Yasin, "U.S. Hard-line Policies Helped Bring about Reformists' Demise in Iran," *Eurasia Insight*, March 8, 2004. The first quotation is Yasin's paraphrase of the advisor's statements.

When the United States attacked Afghanistan in October 2001, the Iranian government provided important aid to U.S. efforts. In the lead-up to the war, Iranian officials met with American representatives in Geneva and provided important intelligence about Afghanistan and the Taliban. During the war, Khatami's government: allowed U.S. transport aircraft to stage from airfields in eastern Iran, agreed to perform search-and-rescue missions for American airmen who were downed over Iran, allowed humanitarian supplies to offload in Iranian ports so as to reach parts of Afghanistan as fast as possible, and helped to facilitate cooperation between U.S. forces and those of the Northern Alliance in Afghanistan. After the Taliban regime collapsed, the Iranians were instrumental in bringing various groups, especially ethnic Pashtuns, into the coalition government led by Hamid Karzai. Iran also developed close relations with this new pro-American government, and provided aid for the reconstruction of the country.[124]

Some of Iran's assistance before and during the war in Afghanistan can be explained by factors unrelated to the ideological divisions among Iranian policymakers. Most importantly, Iran shared America's enmity for Taliban Afghanistan. Iran and Afghanistan had come close to war in 1998 after Taliban soldiers killed ten Iranian diplomats in Iran's consulate in Mazar-e-Sharif. The destruction of the Taliban regime thus coincided with Iran's interests.

Although common interests between America and Iran help explain some of Iran's policies toward the United States after 9/11, factional politics also played a critical role in these developments. Despite sharing America's enmity toward Taliban Afghanistan, Iranian reformers and conservatives exhibited major policy differences during the war. As we shall see, some conservatives remained strongly opposed to helping America, and by January 2002 they were able to push through sufficiently provocative policies toward the United States that they effectively sabotaged momentum toward rapprochement between the two countries. Reformers, in contrast, not only condemned these actions but hoped to use cooperation with the United States over Afghanistan as a springboard to substantially improve overall relations.[125] In October 2001, for example, a majority in the reformist-dominated Majles called on the government not only to aid the United States in Afghanistan but to work for normalization of relations with the United States.[126]

124. Pollack, *The Persian Puzzle*, pp. 346–47; Mohsen M. Milani, "Iran, the Status Quo Power," *Current History* (January 2005), p. 32.

125. Chubin, *Whither Iran?*, p. 98; Seifzadeh, "The Landscape of Factional Politics and Its Future in Iran," p. 73; Tabaar, "The Beloved Great Satan," pp. 71, 74.

126. Pollack, *The Persian Puzzle*, p. 348.

The depth of Iranian reformers' interest in rapprochement with America is revealed by their collective response to increasingly provocative statements about Iran made by U.S. leaders. Most notably, in the January 2002 State of the Union Address President Bush labeled Iran as part of an "Axis of Evil" that threatened the United States and free peoples around the world. Although Iranian reformers were caught off guard and in many ways resented Bush's statement, a number of these individuals reacted to it in ways that were supportive of U.S. interests. To begin with, reformers blamed Iranian conservatives' foreign policies for increasing tensions with America. In fact in the aftermath of the Axis of Evil speech, many Iranian reformers "proved far more critical of their own foreign policy establishment than that of America . . . The dominant theme was 'who lost the United States?'"[127] Reformers in parliament and newspapers argued that conservatives' provocative international actions had left Iran isolated and feared, and thus vulnerable to an American attack.[128]

Even more significant, reformist politicians and newspapers argued that domestic liberalization was ultimately the best, perhaps the only, way to diffuse the U.S. threat. To reformers, Iran's illiberal domestic system was provoking and justifying American hard-line policies. As a direct result of this belief, "reformist newspapers warned the conservative establishment that the only way to preempt the U.S.'s imminent threat was to democratize Iran's political system and allow other groups to participate in the political process. In other words, internal legitimacy was the single best solution to preempt the external threat."[129] As Fatemeh Haghighatjoo expressed this point: "[Reformers] believe that the best deterrent strategy serving Iranian national interest is the increased trust between the state and the people, and the strengthening of civil and democratic institutions."[130] Consistent with these views, in September 2002 Khatami proposed a bill that would strengthen presidential powers at the expense of the supreme leader, and parliamentary reformers proposed another that would limit the power of the Council of Guardians to disqualify candidates running for office.[131]

These statements support a domestic-ideological understanding of international threats. To Iranian reformers, U.S. hostility to Iran was at

127. Ali M. Ansari, *Confronting Iran: The Failure of American Foreign Policy and the Next Great Crisis in the Middle East* (New York: Basic Books, 2007), p. 189.

128. Ray Takeyh, "Iran: Scared Straight?" *PolicyWatch,* No. 622 (May 3, 2002), available at: http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/templateC05.php?CID=1500 (accessed November 15, 2011); Brumberg, "Dilemmas of Western Policies towards Iran," pp. 75–78.

129. Tabaar, "The Beloved Great Satan," p. 64; also p. 71.

130. Haghighatjoo, "Factional Positions on the Nuclear Issue in the Context of Iranian Domestic Politics," p. 3.

131. Brumberg, "Dilemmas of Western Policies towards Iran," p. 80.

heart a product of neither relative power concerns nor anti-Islamic sentiments consistent with clash-of-civilizations thinking. Instead, reformers asserted that American enmity with Iran was caused to a large degree by the repressive nature of the Iranian regime. Shrink the ideological distance dividing the United States and Iran by liberalizing Iranian politics, reformers asserted, *and the United States would not attack Iran*.[132]

At the same time that Iranian reformers were renewing their calls for domestic change, they were also pushing for normalization of relations with the United States. These two objectives were interrelated in reformers' minds. Domestic liberalization in Iran would reduce U.S. leaders' hostilities toward it, and improved relations with the United States would help provide the resources necessary for economic and political change. Hence reformers' assertion that the United States "is an important country and is the key in solving some, if not most, of Iran's problems," including both political liberalization and economic modernization.[133] These beliefs could not have been more different than conservatives' views.

A central component of reformers' efforts to establish normal relations with the United States was a series of initiatives to resolve the most contentious issues dividing the two countries. Most importantly, in May 2003 the Iranian government sent both the U.S. State Department and the White House a proposal for a "grand bargain" between the two countries. The proposal, which was apparently cleared by Iran's most important policymakers, was potentially a diplomatic bombshell that heralded a revolution in U.S.-Iranian relations. In exchange for, among other things, the abolishment of economic sanctions against Iran and the promise of "access to peaceful nuclear technology," the Iranian government promised: 1) "full transparency for security that there are no Iranian endeavors to develop or possess WMD [and] full cooperation with [the] IAEA based on Iranian adoption of all relevant instruments . . . [and] protocols," 2) "decisive action against any terrorists (above all al Qaida) on Iranian territory [and] full cooperation and exchange [with the United States] of all relevant information," 3) "coordination of Iranian influence [in Iraq to support] . . . political stabilization and the establishment of democratic institutions and a non-religious government," and 4) the termination of "any material support to Palestinian opposition groups (Hamas, [Islamic] Jihad, etc.) from Iranian territory [and the promise

132. As the scholar Farideh Farhi expresses this point, "reformists [claimed] . . . that Iran would not be in such a precarious position [with the United States] had there not been a conservative assault on elective institutions and the democratic aspirations of the Iranian people" (Farideh Farhi, "Iran's Nuclear File: The Uncertain Endgame," *Middle East Report Online*, October 24, 2005, p. 9).

133. Tabaar, "The Beloved Great Satan," p. 71. See also Chubin, *Whither Iran?*, p. 84.

to] pressure . . . these organizations to stop violent action against civilians within borders of 1967," 5) "action on Hizbollah to become a mere political organization within Lebanon," and 6) acceptance of the "two-states approach" to end the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.[134] This document, in short, potentially indicated a willingness to resolve the most divisive issues between America and Iran in ways that were highly supportive of U.S. interests.

According to several sources, including Sadegh Kharrazi (Iran's Ambassador to France and also the nephew to Iran's foreign minister and brother-in-law to Khamenei's son) and Tim Guldimann (the Swiss ambassador to Iran, who represents America there), this commitment to comprehensive talks had been reviewed and approved by Iran's key decision makers. This group included Khatami, Foreign Minister Kamal Kharrazi, Ambassador to the United States Javad Zarif, and, most surprisingly, Khamenei (though the Supreme Leader was reported to have remained opposed to much of the document).[135]

A number of factors account for Iranian leaders' apparent interest in engaging in comprehensive negotiations with the United States. Some of these factors have little to do with ideological beliefs. Most notably, the March 2003 U.S. attack on Iraq and the resulting placement of over 170,000 troops in a neighboring country to Iran created powerful incentives for more pragmatic and accommodating behavior lest Iran suffer a similar fate. This explains why even some ideological conservatives like Khamenei supported presenting the United States, however reluctantly, with the "grand bargain" proposal less than two months after the invasion of Iraq. Thus, as with the nuclear issue, some Iranian conservatives were willing to compromise and negotiate with the United States when confronted with strong external coercive threats.

Nevertheless, it must be stressed that Iranian reformers' interest in improved relations with the United States both preceded America's invasion of Iraq and continued even after U.S. forces became bogged down in this state, which was a development that reduced the likelihood of a U.S. attack on Iran. Well after this change, reformist papers, for example, continued to assert that "the U.S. is not necessarily a sworn enemy of Islam or Iran. [Instead] it is an important country [without which] Iran cannot achieve a prosperous future."[136]

134. Document available at http://www.nytimes.com/packages/pdf/opinion/20070429_iran-memo-3.pdf (accessed November 15, 2011). See also Nicholas D. Kristof, "Iran's Proposal for a Grand Bargain," *New York Times* online archive, April 28, 2007; Nicholas D. Kristof, "Diplomacy at its Worst," *New York Times,* April 29, 2007; Glenn Kessler, "2003 Memo Says Iranian Leaders Backed Talks," *Washington Post*, February 14, 2007.

135. Ibid.

136. Tabaar, "The Beloved Great Satan," p. 74.

Conservatives' accommodating policies were much more inconsistent and fleeting, as we shall see in the next section. Reformers' ideological beliefs led to an interest in rapprochement with the United States that went beyond calculations based on American projections of force. The result was much more durable and less ambiguous preferences for cooperation than Iranian conservatives exhibited.

### *Conservatives' Views and Policies*

Iranian conservatives opposed reformers' policies on almost all the issues discussed in the previous section. To begin with, conservatives tended to have very different views of the 9/11 attacks and their likely effects. Popular conservative papers frequently denied that Muslims were behind the attacks, and instead claimed that either American or Israeli officials were their masterminds. The purpose of this conspiracy was to provide the United States a pretext to initiate a crusade against Islam and assert American and Israeli imperialist ambitions throughout the Muslim world.[137] The popular conservative paper, *Kayhan*, wrote in October 2001 that "all the indications and evidence suggest that the United States and its allies are carrying out attacks on Islam. The Muslim nations have no doubt that Bin Laden and [the] Taliban are nothing but excuses to attack the Islamic world."[138]

Some ideological conservatives, including Khamenei, did exhibit streaks of pragmatism that inclined them to cooperate with the United States after 9/11. Hence, for example, Khamenei's decision to allow both aid to the United States during the war in Afghanistan and the initiation of talks with America to achieve a "grand bargain" that would resolve the two states' major differences. A combination of external pressure from the United States, internal pressure from reformers, and the recognition of some common interests with America (e.g., shared enmity against the Taliban and Saddam Hussein's Iraq) were the key factors responsible for these more accommodating initiatives.

These factors working for more pragmatic relations by no means eliminated, however, conservatives' fierce ideological hostility to the United States. As Daniel Brumberg explains, even after 9/11 conservatives "held that the very survival of the country's Islamic revolution hinged on maintaining an ideological wall between Iran and the United States. Armed with this sacred conviction, they concluded that the reformists' efforts to push for rapprochement was part of a conspiracy to destroy the Islamic Republic

137. Tabaar, "The Beloved Great Satan," pp. 64, 66–68.
138. Quoted in Tabaar, "The Beloved Great Satan," p. 68.

of Iran."[139] An editorial in *Jumhuri-ye Islami*, for example, stated that "the attempt to inculcate the proposition that negotiation with the US is the key to the solution of problems is an act of treason."[140]

Despite incentives for more cooperative relations with the United States, conservatives frequently acted on their staunchly anti-American sentiments by taking actions that had costly effects, most notably undermining progress toward rapprochement with the United States and increasing hostilities. After the important cooperation between Iran and America in the fall of 2001 during the war in Afghanistan, Iranian conservatives torpedoed the good will that these policies created. On January 3, 2002, Israel intercepted a ship, the *Karine A*, in the Red Sea. The ship contained an arsenal of weapons, including Katyusha rockets, antitank mines, rocket-propelled grenades, and 2.5 tons of explosives. The arms had been manufactured and loaded onto the ship in Iran. The cargo appears to have been destined for the Palestinian Authority.[141] This event demonstrated to many Americans that Iran was not genuinely interested in rapprochement with the United States and its allies, but instead remained dedicated to the destruction of the Middle Eastern peace process. Parliamentary reformers in Iran indicated that conservative leaders and institutions (likely the Revolutionary Guards) were responsible for this development.[142]

Reinforcing U.S. leaders' suspicions created by the *Karine A* affair was growing evidence after the war in Afghanistan began that Iran was harboring al Qaeda members, including leaders of the group.[143] Iranian conservatives, apparently again led by members of the Revolutionary Guards, were most likely responsible. Iran's intelligence minister, Ali Yunesi acknowledged that "small and big-time elements of al Qaeda" were in Iran and that his agency (which was controlled by reformers) was apprehending them.[144] Some reformers accused conservatives of aiding al Qaeda in order to raise international tensions, which would facilitate increased domestic repression and the persecution of political opponents (i.e., reformers).[145]

139. Daniel Brumberg, "End of a Brief Affair? The United States and Iran," *Policy Brief* No. 14 (March 2002), p. 3, available at: http://www.carnegieendowment.org/files/Policybrief14.pdf. Accessed November 15, 2011.

140. Both quoted in Seifzadeh, "The Landscape of Factional Politics and Its Future in Iran," p. 73.

141. See Pollack, *The Persian Puzzle*, pp. 350–53.

142. Samii, "Tehran, Washington, and Terror," p. 65, note 65. One reformer complained in parliament at the time of the *Karine A* affair that "illegal power centers [were] providing excuses for external attacks" (quoted in Takeyh, *Guardians of the Revolution*, p. 213).

143. Douglas Jehl and Eric Schmitt, "Havens: U.S. Suggests a Qaeda Cell in Iran Directed Saudi Bombings," *New York Times*, May 21, 2003.

144. Quoted in Takeyh, "Iranian Options," p. 55; Pollack, *The Persian Puzzle*, p. 358.

145. Samii, "Tehran, Washington, and Terror," p. 65, note 65.

In sum, while some conservatives like Khamenei approved, at least temporarily, more accommodating foreign policies with the United States, other members of this group (and perhaps even Khamenei) adopted actions that could only fuel America's enmity toward Iran. The *Karine A* affair and revelations about Iran's harboring al Qaeda members undermined progress toward improved relations with the United States that had been achieved in the fall of 2001 during the war in Afghanistan. Less than one month after the *Karine A* affair, Bush delivered his Axis of Evil speech, and two days after that National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice commented that "Iran's direct support of regional and global terrorism, and its aggressive efforts to acquire weapons of mass destruction, belie any good intentions it displayed in the days after the world's worst terrorist attacks in history."[146]

Iranian conservatives' contradictory policies continued during the Iraq War. Iran and the United States possessed a number of important common interests in this conflict. Both states were enemies of Saddam Hussein. Neither state wanted to see Iraq ripped apart by civil war. Just as it could for America, a weak, divided Iraq could become a haven for hostile terrorists, most notably the Mujahedin-e-Khalq (the MEK is an Iranian group operating out of Iraq that is dedicated to the destruction of the IRI). American liberalization efforts would also likely empower Iraqi Shia, which was an outcome supported by Iran. Finally, cooperation by the Iranians in Iraq would perhaps help ensure that Iran was not next on America's "target" list.

These considerations led many of Iran's key decision makers from across the political spectrum to cooperate with the United States, at least during the first year of the war. Most importantly according to one U.S. analyst, "Tehran told its various proxy groups in Iraq not to resist the United States and instead participate in the U.S.-led process of reconstruction . . . If the Iranians had wanted to cause chaos in Iraq, they could have easily done so in the darkest days after the war [began]."[147]

These cooperative policies did not last long, however. The reduced likelihood that the United States would attack Iran as conditions in Iraq worsened, combined with the election of the conservative Ahmadinejad to the presidency in 2005, worked for increasingly hostile policies toward America. By 2006, the U.S. military claimed to have proof that Iran was providing

146. Quoted in Ariel Cohen, "Regional Powers in Central Asia Grapple with Expanding U.S. Military Presence," *Eurasia Insight*, February 6, 2002. A senior U.S. official told *The New York Times* that the *Karine A* incident "was a sign to the president that the Iranians weren't serious" about improving relations (quoted in David E. Sanger, "Bush Aides Say Tough Tone Put Foes on Notice," *New York Times*, January 31, 2002).

147. Pollack, *The Persian Puzzle*, p. 355.

significant aid, including training, money, and arms, to violent groups in Iraq that were targeting American troops. This aid apparently went not only to Shiite extremists but to Sunni groups as well, including al Qaeda affiliates. By 2007, Iranian aid to America's enemies was so extensive that U.S. officials claimed that Iran was engaged in a "proxy war against American, British, and Iraqi forces."[148]

In sum, as in Afghanistan, Iranian conservatives' interest in cooperation with the United States in Iraq remained much shallower than that of reformers. Conservatives maintained relatively helpful policies only as long as the external and internal pressures to do so remained quite strong. By 2005, these conditions were no longer met, thereby allowing conservatives' ideological hostility toward the United States to dominate their decision making once again. By this time, "the only faction that continued to be interested in a normalization of relations with the United States was the reformers."[149]

## AMERICA'S IRANIAN POLICIES: THE EFFICACY OF IDEOLOGICAL HARD- AND SOFT-LINE STRATEGIES

The analysis in the preceding sections demonstrates the centrality of different Iranian leaders' ideological beliefs—and thus ideological distances with the United States—to those policies that had the greatest impact on American security interests. The most important policymakers in the Bill Clinton and George W. Bush presidencies recognized this fact. As I detail below, key leaders in these administrations believed both that ideological differences with Iran were the root source of hostilities between the two countries and that liberalizing ideological changes in Iran would lead to significantly improved relations. Both sets of individuals, in other words, subscribed more to an ideological understanding of the threats posed by Iran than to realist views, and both wanted to help export liberal ideological principles to Iran as a key means of augmenting U.S. security (as Hypothesis 3A predicts).

148. John F. Burns and Michael R. Gordon, "U.S. Says Iran Helped Iraqis Kill Five G.I.'s," *New York Times,* July 3, 2007; Michael R. Gordon and Andrew W. Lehren, "Leaked Reports Detail Iran's Aid for Iraqi Militias," *New York Times*, October 22, 2010.

149. Takeyh, *Guardians of the Revolution*, p. 219. The differences between Iranian conservatives' and reformers' views of the Iraq war are also illustrated by these groups' accounts in party newspapers. Whereas reformist newspapers tended to focus on the hope for democracy in Iraq, conservative papers focused on the carnage and human rights abuses created by the war (Tabaar, "The Beloved Great Satan," pp. 68–69, 73).

Within the context of this agreement, however, the Clinton and Bush administrations for the most part pursued different strategies for advancing U.S. interests. Clinton adopted policies that were largely consistent with what I labeled in chapter 1 the "ideological soft-line" perspective, Bush with the "ideological hard-line" position. These different strategies had varying degrees of effectiveness under different conditions in ways that support the predictions of Hypothesis 3B.

Among Clinton officials, there was consensus before Khatami's election to the presidency that "Iran was the archetype of a hostile, rogue regime—the most important state sponsor of militant Islamic terrorism. The evidence was clear: active subversion of pro-American governments across the Arab world; assassinations of Iranian dissidents abroad; and the surveillance of Americans, presumably for similar treatment."[150] These views led the Clinton administration to adopt increasingly aggressive policies toward Iran. In May 1995, Clinton signed an executive order that banned all trade and other financial and commercial relations with Iran. In August 1996, Clinton signed the Iran-Libya Sanctions Act (ILSA). This bill initiated "secondary" sanctions on all foreign companies (including those from Europe) that invested in Iran's oil industry in excess of $40 billion (this amount was subsequently lowered to $20 billion). In 1997, the United States began a large-scale covert action program that "outed" Iranian agents around the globe.[151]

U.S. views and policies toward Iran underwent important changes after the reformer Khatami became president. These changes were consistent with an "ideological soft-line" perspective. To ideological soft-liners, a complete revolution is not a necessary prerequisite for meaningful ideological, and thus international-policy, change. Instead, diminishment in the ideological distances dividing states' leaders can also result in a significant improvement in their relations. Soft-liners also recognize that continued provocative policies in the face of important ideological shifts in other states will likely discredit ideological reformers, to the benefit of conservatives' domestic power.

These soft-line views were the ones that dominated the Clinton administration by the end of 1997. Khatami's liberalizing domestic changes, assertions of some degree of ideological affinity with the West, including America, statements calling for more accommodating policies toward both the United States and Israel, and some other early positive actions that supported Khatami's commitment to foreign policy changes convinced the

150. Martin Indyk, *Innocent Abroad*, p. 39.
151. Pollack, *The Persian Puzzle*, pp. 273, 286–88, 291.

most important American policymakers both that they were dealing with a fundamentally different type of Iranian leader and that they should support Khatami even if the basic Iranian regime structure and overall political dominance by ideological conservatives continued.

According to Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, for example, Khatami's election indicated that Iran was taking "a more open and less confrontational approach to the world."[152] At another time, she remarked that "President Khatami deserves respect because he is the choice of the Iranian people." Khatami possessed a popular mandate for "greater freedoms, a more civil society based on the rule of law, and a more moderate foreign policy aimed at ending Iran's estrangement from the international community."[153] The ultimate result of Khatami's electoral victory was the beginning of a possible breakthrough in U.S.-Iranian relations: "As the wall of mistrust comes down, we can develop with the Islamic Republic . . . a road map leading to normal relations."[154] Similarly, Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs Martin Indyk asserted that liberalizing domestic changes under Khatami were making it much less dangerous to the United States than was Iraq, which was not experiencing liberalizing reforms. While significant differences between the United States and Iran continued, Iran's domestic changes provided reason to be optimistic about the future of their relations. America's leaders, as Indyk explained, believed that "nations living according to democratic and pluralistic values internally will also abide more fully and more naturally with internationally accepted norms of behavior in their foreign policies."[155]

These views pushed officials in the Clinton administration, despite nearly a twenty-year history of highly antagonistic relations with Iran, to respond favorably to the ideological and policy changes that followed Khatami's election. According to Kenneth Pollack (who, during the Clinton administration, was an analyst on the Persian Gulf for the CIA and later the Director for Persian Gulf Affairs at the National Security Council), "By late 1997, Clinton, his top advisors, and his Persian Gulf team at the White House and State Department had become so convinced of Khatami's sincere desire to

152. Madeleine Albright, "Ensuring Foreign Policy Tools That Sustain American Leadership," statement before the Subcommittee on Foreign Operations, Export Financing and Related Programs of the House Appropriations Committee, March 4, 1998, *U.S. Department of State Dispatch* (April 1998), p. 14.

153. Both from Albright, "Strengthening U.S.-Asian Ties," p. 7.

154. Albright, "Strengthening U.S.-Asian Ties," p. 8.

155. Martin S. Indyk, "U.S. Policy Toward the Middle East," testimony before the House International Relations Committee, June 8, 1999, *U.S. Department of State Dispatch* (July 1999), p. 16; also p. 12.

improve relations that we began a series of gestures intended to provide the Iranian president with the ammunition that his unofficial envoys to the United States were saying he needed."[156] The Clinton administration, as Indyk put it, "was keen to help Khatami succeed" because these officials believed that refusal to reciprocate Khatami's offers to improve relations would only confirm Iranian conservatives' claims that America was irreconcilably hostile to Iran no matter what Iranian leaders said or did, thereby damaging reformers' domestic position.[157] The Americans wanted to help Khatami because they believed that U.S. interests were profoundly affected by which ideological faction governed in Iran.

In order to aid Khatami and fellow reformers in their domestic battles with conservatives, the Clinton administration from 1997 to 2000 relaxed visa restrictions for Iranians who wanted to visit the United States (Khatami had asked for increased cultural exchanges and people-to-people contacts); added the MEK to the State Department's list of terrorist groups, thereby making it illegal to provide this group financial assistance (this was a major benefit for Khatami); removed Iran from the State Department's list of major states engaged in the production and traffic of narcotics; and relaxed economic sanctions against Iran, including those on foodstuffs and carpets (which were the second and third largest categories of exports from Iran), spare parts for airliners so as to ensure the safety of Iran's passenger aircraft, and the "secondary" sanctions on foreign companies that invested in Iran's oil industry. The Clinton administration also decided not to retaliate against Iran in the spring of 1999 when the Saudi government provided the United States information indicating Iranian support for the June 1996 terrorist bombing of the Khobar Towers housing facility in Saudi Arabia, which killed nineteen U.S. servicemen. Clinton officials decided against retribution because in their estimation Iran was now governed "by a new administration that seemed to be trying hard to get Iran out of the terrorism business." Although Iran had not undergone a revolution, reformers' ascension to power led U.S. leaders to believe that an important ideological change had occurred, which made Iran less threatening to American interests.[158]

The most important U.S. officials also acknowledged wrongs done by the United States against Iran in the past and expressed regret for them. Foremost among these events was U.S. participation in the 1953 coup

156. Pollack, *The Persian Puzzle*, p. 320.

157. Martin Indyk, *Innocent* Abroad, p. 217; also Pollack, *The Persian Puzzle*, p. 317.

158. On the preceding points, see Pollack, *The Persian Puzzle*, pp. 320–24, 337; Menashri, *Post-Revolutionary Politics in Iran*, p. 315; and Buchta, *Who Rules Iran?* p. 129. The quotation is from Pollack, *The Persian Puzzle*, p. 324.

against the Mohammad Mosaddeq government. This event still animated Iranians over forty years later. U.S. leaders' acknowledgements and apologies for America's role in this event were therefore important concessions to Iranian nationalism, and they received widespread media coverage in Iran. In an April 1999 speech, President Clinton stated that Iran "has been the subject of quite a lot of abuse from various Western nations." Iranians, therefore, "have a right to be angry at something my country or my culture or others that are generally allied with us today did to you."[159] Albright was even more explicit in acknowledging mistakes made by the United States and regret for them. In a speech delivered in March of 2000 (which was in large part in reaction to reformers' victory in the parliamentary elections the month before) the secretary of state said: "In 1953, the United States played a significant role in orchestrating the overthrow of Iran's popular Prime Minister, Mohammad Mosaddeq . . . [The] coup was clearly a set back for Iran's political development . . . [The] United States and the West [also] gave sustained backing to the Shah's regime . . . [which] brutally repressed political dissent. As President Clinton has said, the United States must bear its fair share of responsibility for the problems that have arisen in U.S.-Iranian relations."[160]

Iranian reformers responded positively to America's more accommodating actions and statements; conservatives did not. After Albright's speech, Khatami asserted that a "new turn" had taken place in U.S.-Iranian relations. Reformers at this time renewed their calls for normal and cooperative relations with the United States as the best way of advancing Iranian interests.[161] Ideological conservatives' views of America, in contrast, remained hostile. Khamenei rejected Albright's acknowledgment of U.S. participation in the 1953 coup as irrelevant to Iran, especially since the United States might be "committing similar crimes now."[162] Indeed to the Supreme Leader, American policymakers' outreach was in reality "just another ploy laying the ground for their sinister plots."[163]

The Bush administration's policies toward Iran were much more consistent with the ideological hard-line perspective that I described in chapter 1.

159. Quoted in Pollack, *The Persian Puzzle*, p. 323.

160. Quoted in Pollack, *The Persian Puzzle*, p. xxv.

161. Menashri, *Post-Revolutionary Politics in Iran*, p. 316; Pollack, *The Persian Puzzle*, p. 339. Elite interviews conducted in 2000 and 2002 revealed that Albright's speech made a strong and favorable impression on Iranian reformers. See Heradstveit and Bonham, "What the Axis of Evil Metaphor Did to Iran," p. 427. Iranian conservatives' reassertion of their political dominance in 1998 and 1999 no doubt limited Khatami's ability to respond favorably to Clinton's overtures.

162. Quoted in Pollack, *The Persian Puzzle*, p. xxvi; also Menashri, *Post-Revolutionary Politics in Iran*, p. 316.

163. Quoted in Takeyh, *Guardians of the Revolution*, p. 203.

To key leaders in the Bush presidency, only a full-blown liberal regime change in Iran would result in significantly improved relations with the United States. In the absence of revolution, the ascension to power of different ideological factions within Iran's ruling circles would have very little policy effects. Thus Bush officials claimed that the only meaningful political distinction in Iran from the American point of view was between the illiberal Iranian government (which was bound to be hostile to the United States regardless of factional shifts) and the Iranian people (who would cooperate with America once they possessed sufficient power). As one U.S. official said in July 2002, "we have made a conscious decision to associate with the aspirations of the Iranian people. We will not play . . . the factional politics of reform versus hard-line."[164] Or as senior white House aide Zalmay Khalilzad stated the following month: "Our policy is not about Khatami or Khamenei, reform or hard-line; it is about supporting those [Iranian citizens] who want freedom, human rights, [and] democracy."[165] This thinking also helps explain Bush's making his Axis of Evil speech even though at the time Iranian reformers controlled both the presidency and parliament. As President Bush explained: "[T]he fact that the president of the United States would stand up and say Iran is jut like Iraq and North Korea . . . is part of how you deal with Iran. And that is to inspire those who love freedom inside the country."[166]

Hard-liners in the Bush administration had so little faith that Iranian reformers would adopt sufficiently cooperative international policies that some of these individuals rooted for Iranian conservatives to win the 2005 presidential election. These U.S. officials believed that Iranian conservatives' policies were more likely both to keep Western states united in their hostility toward Iran and to make a revolution in Iran more likely due to conservatives' highly repressive domestic policies.[167]

The belief that only a liberal revolution in Iran would end enmity with the United States shaped the Bush administration's Iranian policies in critical ways. Most importantly, it strongly predisposed these leaders against significant engagement in favor of aggressive policies that were designed to provoke a regime change. Thus, for the first five and one-half years of his presidency, Bush opposed reducing economic sanctions against Iran, even if these policies would help Iranian reformers or encourage more accommodating

164. Quoted in Brumberg, "Dilemmas of Western Policies towards Iran," p. 78. See also Chubin, *Iran's Nuclear Ambitions*, p. 84.

165. Quoted in Takeyh, *Hidden Iran*, p. 129.

166. Quoted in Bob Woodward, *Plan of Attack* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2004), p. 88.

167. Guy Dinmore and Roula Khalaf, "U.S. Hawks Rooting for Hardline Iranian Candidate," *Financial Times*, June 24, 2005.

policies. As Undersecretary of State for Arms Control and International Security John Bolton succinctly put it, "I don't do carrots."[168] Because the goal was revolution in Iran, U.S. economic policies that aided the current regime—even when led by reformers—were considered counterproductive.

The same thinking also led Bush administration officials to limit and often oppose negotiating with Iran for much of their time in office, even when the talks involved issues that were critical to U.S. interests, including Iran's development of nuclear weapons and the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq.[169] Leaders of the Bush White House, for example, decided not to explore the possibility of the "grand bargain" that was presented to the United States in 2003. It seems that the proposal was rejected out of hand by Bush officials as either not authoritative or a ruse.[170]

Even if Iran was willing to make a deal on one or more of the issues discussed in the "grand bargain" proposal, it is not clear that the Bush White House was willing to take "yes" for an answer. This is the view, for example, of Flynt Leverett, who was the senior director for Middle East affairs at the National Security Council in 2002 and 2003. In a 2006 interview, Leverett stated that "in [President Bush's] view you have this unelected set of clerical authorities, epitomized by the supreme leader, who are thwarting the clearly expressed will of the Iranian people for a more open, participatory political system, for more political, social, intellectual, and cultural freedom . . . And so it's a system that in Bush's mind is fundamentally illegitimate. It's a system that needs to change, and he is not going to do a deal that lets this regime off the hook, even if that deal would solve our problem with them over the nuclear issue." He said, "You don't do a deal that would effectively legitimate this regime that he considers fundamentally illegitimate. I think that's the real issue."[171]

Notice the irony in these beliefs. While ideological hard-liners in the United States did not want to negotiate with Iran lest they legitimate the regime, Iranian conservatives wanted to limit interactions with America because they feared that these developments would subvert, not strengthen, their government.

168. Quoted in Chubin, *Iran's Nuclear Ambitions*, p. 89.

169. The United States under Bush and Iran did conduct some negotiations, either directly or through proxies, on these issues. These talks remained, however, sporadic and limited.

170. Kristof, "Iran's Proposal for a Grand Bargain"; Kristof, "Diplomacy at its Worst"; Kessler, "2003 Memo Says Iranian Leaders Backed Talks."

171. Quoted in Bernard Gwertzman, "Leverett: Bush Administration 'Not Serious' about Dealing with Iran," Council on Foreign Relations interview on March 31, 2006, available at http://www.cfr.org/publication/10326/. Accessed November 15, 2011. See also Chubin, *Iran's Nuclear Ambitions*, pp. 88, 90–92. Similarly, Javier Solana (the Secretary General of the Council of the European Union) stated that "President Bush has said very clearly [the Americans] don't want to legitimate the regime. They cannot get engaged because it means legitimating them" (quoted in Chubin, *Iran's Nuclear Ambitions*, pp. 184–85, note 31).

From 2006 to 2009, however, the United States joined with the European powers, Russia, and China in offering Iran both positive and negative incentives for policy changes: increased sanctions if Iran refused to abandon its nuclear weapons program, but major benefits if it did so. These rewards included the end of existing trade sanctions, support for Iran's joining the WTO, and helping to develop a civilian nuclear program in Iran.[172] This change was largely due to the realization that economic sanctions against Iran would be most effective only if the other great powers joined with America in implementing them, and the only way the United States could persuade these states to do this was to offer Iran positive incentives first.[173] U.S. leaders made this change over considerable opposition within the administration and with the expectation (and perhaps the hope) that the cooperative offers to Iran would fail.[174]

Both the ideological hard-line and soft-line policies implemented by U.S. leaders from 1995 to 2009 created important benefits and costs. As Hypothesis 3B predicts, a critical variable determining which of these outcomes predominated was the domestic power of reformers in Iran. When American actions were tied to changing domestic developments in Iran, these policies had the best chance of advancing U.S. interests.

The hard-line policies adopted by the Clinton administration from 1995 to 1997 and by the Bush administration throughout most of its tenure had two principal advantages. (Some analysts claim that hard-line actions, including economic sanctions, have not worked in advancing American interests toward Iran;[175] the evidence presented in this section refutes this assertion.) First, deterrent actions by the Americans helped to induce a certain amount of pragmatism in Iranian conservatives. For example, in response to Clinton's hard-line policies described above, Iranian leaders scaled back somewhat their confrontational behavior. Iranian warships in the Persian Gulf maintained greater distances from American ships. Iran also reduced its support of revolutionaries and dissidents in other Middle Eastern states and began a

172. Mary Jordan and Robin Wright, "Major Powers Offer Iran New Incentives," *Washington Post*, May 3, 2008; "Text of P5 + 1 Nuclear Package of Incentives Offered to Iran," July 18, 2006, http://www.iranfocus.com/en/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=7947. Accessed November 15, 2011.

173. David E. Sanger, "Bush's Realization on Iran: No Good Choice Left Except Talks," *New York Times*, June 1, 2006.

174. Helene Cooper, "U.S. Offering Deals on Trade to Entice Iran," *New York Times*, June 6, 2006; Helene Cooper and David E. Sanger, "Strategy on Iran Stirs New Debate at White House," *New York Times*, June 16, 2007.

175. See, for example, Suzanne Maloney, "Sanctioning Iran: If Only It Were That Simple," *Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 33, No. 1 (January 2010), pp. 131–47; John J. Mearsheimer and Stephen M. Walt, *The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2007), ch. 10.

process of rapprochement with Saudi Arabia, one of America's most important allies in the Islamic world.[176] As discussed above, the Bush administration's deployment of forces to fight the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq also induced important cooperation from Iranian conservatives. Most notably, Khamenei acquiesced to Khatami's preferences to aid the United States during the war in Afghanistan and to offer America in 2003 a "grand bargain" proposal aimed at resolving U.S.-Iranian disputes.

Second, U.S. hard-line policies helped to embolden Iranian reformers and pragmatists, at least when conservatives controlled all of Iran's key political institutions. When the United States and its allies responded forcefully to conservatives' provocations, reformers pointed to these actions to demonstrate the ineffectiveness and dangers created by their domestic rivals' actions. This was most notably the case after Ahmadinejad's election to Iran's presidency. Ahmadinejad's provocative rhetoric and his government's more ambitious pursuit of nuclear weapons resulted in Iran's increasing international isolation. As a result, domestic opponents of Iranian hard-liners were better able to criticize the government. According to a senior Iranian official, during Ahmadinejad's first six months in power, those Iranians "who thought [Ahmadinejad's] hard-line approach [on the nuclear issue] was a bad choice were staying silent because it appeared to be succeeding."[177] But once the United States succeeded in March 2006 in having the UN Security Council debate sanctions against Iran, opponents of Ahmadinejad's policies felt free to speak out. The actual passage of sanctions by the UN in December 2006 even further "intensified the domestic debate in Iran regarding the nuclear program."[178]

According to Nasser Hadian, a political science professor at Tehran University who is close to many reformist members of the government, the international hard-line reaction to Ahmadinejad's policies resulted in reformers feeling "vindicated" about their policies and justified in renewing their calls for their reimplementation.[179] Former President Khatami, for example, began

176. Pollack, *The Persian Puzzle*, pp. 292–93.

177. Michael Slackman, "In Iran, Dissenting Voices Rise on Its Leaders' Nuclear Strategy," *New York Times*, March 15, 2006.

178. Y. Mansharof, "Iranian Domestic Criticism of Iran's Nuclear Strategy," *Middle East Media Research Institute*, Inquiry and Analysis No. 317, January 24, 2007, p. 1, online pagination.

179. Slackman, "In Iran, Dissenting Voices Rise on Its Leaders' Nuclear Strategy." In the same vein as the nuclear issue, reformers feared what might happen if Hizbollah emerged victorious in its 2006 military conflict with Israel (though reformers were not sympathetic to Israel). Hizbollah's victory, reformers feared, would only embolden conservatives' international aggressiveness and domestic oppression. According to Behzad Nabavi, a former deputy speaker of parliament, "if Iran succeeds in its goals in the conflict in Lebanon, it can strengthen the hand of the [conservative] establishment" (quoted in Michael Slackman, "Mideast Conflict a Setback for Iran Reform Movement," *New York Times*, August 1, 2006). These views reveal reformers' interest in firm international responses to Iranian conservatives' aggressive policies.

after the imposition of UN sanctions against Iran to criticize publicly Ahmadinejad's aggressive actions, and he called for more accommodating policies and confidence-building measures to diffuse international tensions.[180] Muhammad Reza Khatami, the former president's brother and leader of a reformist party, stated in the aftermath of the discussion of sanctions at the UN that "we have written numerous letters to Leader Khamenei to explain that insisting on enriching uranium is not in the country's interest; that in this way we lose all the benefits gained over the past sixteen years; and that the only proper position is suspension of uranium-enrichment activities and negotiations with the aim of fostering trust and having international oversight."[181] In December 2006, Mohsen Armin (spokesman of a reformist party in parliament) stated that "the [UN] Security Council sanctions resolution is a clear . . . defeat of Iran's new politicians and their diplomacy. If this policy continues, there is no doubt that it will fail and bring about harmful consequences."[182] The increased pressure that reformers applied in the aftermath of UN sanctions may have had some effects on Iranian politics. Some hard-liners were removed from power in 2007, including Deputy Interior Minister Mojtaba Hashemi Samarah (who was one of Ahmadinejad's closest allies), and Yahya Rahim Safavi, the IRGC's commander since 1997.[183]

The Bush administration's aggressive responses to Iranian conservatives' provocations (especially when the United States was able to gain the support of the other great powers through the United Nations) thus contributed to favorable outcomes for American interests, just as did similar policies by the Clinton administration. This statement may seem strange given both the apparent progress of Iran's nuclear program during the Bush presidency and Iran's increased involvement in the Iraqi civil war. The key point is that

180. Nazila Fathi, "Former Iranian President Publicly Assails Ahmadinejad," *New York Times,* December 12, 2007.

181. Quoted in Takeyh, *Hidden Iran,* p. 152.

182. Quoted in Mansharof, "Iranian Domestic Criticism of Iran's Nuclear Strategy," p. 6; see also Farhi, "Iran's Nuclear File," p. 9.

183. Michael Jacobson, "Sanctions against Iran: A Promising Struggle," *Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 31, No. 3 (Summer 2008), p. 79. It is not inevitable that Western hard-line policies hurt conservatives' interests, however. As explained above, some Iranian conservatives have welcomed diplomatic isolation, economic sanctions, and international tensions because these outcomes reduce the chances of ideological subversion, confirm the "enemy image" of the West, and justify domestic oppression as necessary in order to confront an external threat. A key way to help ensure that Iran's isolation hurts conservatives' interests instead of helping them is for Western states to offer major benefits along with penalties. Western leaders, in other words, should make clear that specific policies implemented by Iranian hard-liners are the cause of Iran's isolation, and if Iran rejected aggressive foreign policies while making progress on domestic reforms, not only would sanctions end but important new benefits would be forthcoming. The U.S. could also engage in "smart sanctions" that selectively target the interests of Iranian leaders as opposed to those of ordinary citizens.

hard-line policies toward Iran when reformers held little political power provided American leaders the best chance of achieving their goals in comparison to other policy options. In the absence of hard-line policies, Iranian conservatives under these conditions would very likely have been even more aggressive in these areas.[184] Iranian reformers believed this to be the case, as evidenced by their support of firm international responses to conservatives' policies under Ahmadinejad, as well as reformers' repeated reference to these responses as they tried to discredit Ahmadinejad's actions.

The costs of America's hard-line policies toward Iran were at times also considerable. Most importantly, when Iranian reformers possessed significant political power and were making headway in adopting more accommodating actions—including cooperating in the war in Afghanistan, presenting the United States a "grand bargain," and suspending uranium enrichment in 2003—U.S. leaders' intransigence undermined reformers' domestic power and gave credence to conservatives' claims of irreconcilable American enmity.

Perhaps the most harmful to reformers' interests was Bush's inclusion of Iran as a member of the "Axis of Evil" in his 2002 State of the Union speech. This statement occurred at the height of reformers' domestic power and after substantial aid given to the United States in the war in Afghanistan. Although some reformers tried to make the best of this situation by using Bush's remarks as a catalyst for additional domestic and foreign policy changes, many from this ideological group claimed that the speech helped to demoralize reformers and empower conservatives. Iranian reformers have described the Axis of Evil speech as a "betrayal" and a "slap in the face of all those who trusted the USA" (notice feelings of trust toward the United States, which were the opposite of conservatives' views, and are consistent with the predictions of Hypothesis 1). The speech also, according to one reformer's account, strengthened "conservatives' assiduously-used argument that the USA is hostile to Iran."[185] President Khatami claimed that Bush's statement badly "damaged relations" between the two countries, making them in some ways "worse" than they were after the Iranian Revolution.[186]

184. For related analysis, see Chubin, *Iran's Nuclear Ambitions*, p. 140.

185. These quotations are from eighteen reformers surveyed in March and April 2002. According to the surveyors, almost all respondents believed that the Axis of Evil speech "had an enormous impact on the tug of war between the conservatives and reformers." There was "a massive consensus that the speech was a godsend to the conservatives, revitalizing the bloodthirsty anti-American rhetoric from the days of the Revolution. The conservatives took the speech as the final proof that their enemy image of the United States had been right all along, and that the reformers, with their wish for dialogue, were naive." See Heradstveit and Bonham, "What the Axis of Evil Metaphor Did to Iran," quotations from pp. 434–37.

186. Quoted in BBC Documentary, Iran and the West, Episode 3, "Nuclear Confrontation."

According to some analysts, including Iranian political advisors, reformers' inability during the Bush administration to make significant strides toward rapprochement with the United States was "a major contributing factor to the reformists' demise."[187] Reformers informed foreign representatives that they wanted to improve relations with Europe and America (including the easing of sanctions) so that they could demonstrate to Iranian voters that they were capable of achieving concrete improvements.[188] When these concessions did not materialize, reformers looked ineffective to the electorate. Khatami told European negotiators that "hard-liners [in Iran] think America wants to deny us our rights. . . .The more time you waste [in improving relations with Iran] the stronger they [Iranian hard-liners] get."[189] Reformers lost the 2004 parliamentary and the 2005 presidential elections to ideological conservatives. After this latter election, reformers had relatively little influence in Iran's policymaking circles.

Another failure of U.S. hard-line policies was that they inclined their proponents to overlook potential opportunities to advance America's interests by anything short of a full-blown ideological revolution in the enemy regime (John Bolton summarized hard-liners' views when he stated that "regime change or the use of force are the only available options to prevent Iran getting a nuclear weapons capability").[190] Hence Bush administration officials' preference to limit negotiations with Iran and their belief that there were no major policy differences between Iranian reformers and conservatives. We will never know, for example, if Iran's 2003 proposal for a "grand bargain" would have resulted in significant changes in U.S.-Iranian relations, since the offer was rejected before official talks on it even began.

The benefits and drawbacks of ideological soft-line policies were the mirror image of hard-line actions. The principal cost of soft-line policies was that they emboldened aggressive actions by Iranian conservatives. Throughout the 1990s, the European powers engaged in a set of policies toward Iran that became known as the "critical dialogue." The core component of this strategy was using greater trade and other commercial dealings to try to encourage more cooperative behavior by Iran. These policies, though, failed in their objective. If anything, Iran became more provocative as the decade progressed, including increasing support of international terrorist groups.[191] Only U.S. economic sanctions and other hard-line policies beginning in 1995 were followed by a change in Iranian behavior.

187. Yasin, "U.S. Hard-line Policies Helped Bring about Reformists' Demise in Iran."
188. BBC Documentary, Iran and the West, Episode 3, "Nuclear Confrontation."
189. Quoted in BBC Documentary, Iran and the West, Episode 3, "Nuclear Confrontation."
190. Quoted in Cooper and Sanger, "Strategy on Iran Stirs New Debate at White House."
191. See Pollack, *The Persian Puzzle*, pp. 253–61 for details.

Another drawback of soft-line policies in this case is that at no time was American cooperation able to help Iranian reformers gain sufficient political power that they could dominate policymaking. Conservatives, in fact, continued to have the greater power throughout this period. Ideological hard-liners in the United States thus had a point in believing that because there was not a revolution in Iran, there were significant limits to the policy changes that Iranian reformers could implement.

Despite previous failures of soft-line policies toward Iran when dominated by conservatives, the Obama presidency returned to these tactics, and with similar results. The overall tenor of Obama administration officials' statements toward Iran throughout 2009 was one of outreach and engagement. The president himself made a number of important conciliatory gestures that were designed to reduce hostilities. Two months after his inauguration, Obama made a videotaped message directly to the Iranians. In the message, the president made the unusual step for a high-ranking U.S. official of referring to Iran as "the Islamic Republic of Iran," which was a nod to the legitimacy of the Iranian Islamist revolution. Obama offered the promise of a "new day" in U.S.-Iranian relations which would allow for "renewed exchanges among our people, and greater opportunities for partnership and commerce." The process of improving relations, the president said, "will not be advanced by threats. We seek instead engagement that is honest and grounded in mutual respect."[192]

Iranian conservatives responded to this and similar overtures with contempt and threats. In reaction to Obama's videotaped message to Iran, Supreme Leader Khamenei claimed that there was no change in U.S.-Iranian relations and that Obama had "insulted the Islamic Republic of Iran from the first day."[193] President Ahmadinejad stated at the end of June 2009 after his reelection that "without a doubt, Iran's new government will have a more decisive and firmer approach toward the West." He said, "This time [Iran's] reply will be harsh" to make the West regret its "meddlesome stance" toward Iranian politics.[194] This and similar statements came after Obama showed considerable restraint in criticizing both the major irregularities, likely involving fraud, in the June 2009 Iranian presidential elections and the subsequent violent crackdown on popular protests of the election's results, and even though Obama promised to continue to engage Iran despite these

192. All quotations from Alan Cowell, "In a Video Appeal to Iran, Obama Offers a 'New Day,'" *New York Times,* March 21, 2009.

193. Quoted in "Iran's Supreme Leader Dismisses Obama Overtures," Associated Press, March 21, 2009.

194. Quoted in Thomas Erdbrink and William Branigin, "Iran's President Rebukes Obama," *Washington Post,* June 28, 2009.

developments.[195] By the fall of 2009, Khamenei and other ideological conservatives labeled Obama's outreach policies ones of "soft war" (i.e., efforts at ideological subversion) that were in some ways more dangerous than the Bush's administration's conventional threats.[196] These charges continued into 2010.[197] The failures of Obama's soft-line policies in 2009 led the president to spearhead a series of new, multilateral sanctions against Iran in 2010.

The main benefit of soft-line policies adopted by U.S. leaders in the years examined was that when Iranian reformers were able to push through more accommodating international actions, American reciprocation likely boosted reformers' domestic power. U.S. cooperation both demonstrated that reformers' policies could reap important international dividends and undermined conservatives' assertions of permanent American enmity. Thus Clinton's more accommodating foreign policies from 1997 to 2000 likely helped reformers reach the zenith of their power. Reformers won the 1999 municipal, the 2000 parliamentary, and the 2001 presidential elections. While reformers never eclipsed conservatives' political power, they did have enough influence to adopt important policy changes, including reducing support for terrorism, aiding U.S. war efforts in Afghanistan and Iraq, offering to begin negotiations with the United States on a host of key issues, and scaling back Iran's nuclear weapons program.[198] These were major benefits for U.S. interests. While a full-blown liberal revolution in Iran would very likely have resulted in even greater advantages for U.S. security, in the absence of this event, helping to maximize Iranian reformers' domestic power was the next best alternative. Moreover, if the likelihood of a revolution in Iran was relatively low in this period, then supporting reformers was most likely the choice that had the best chance of protecting American interests. (For a summary of when ideological soft- and hard-line policies were most and least successful toward Iran in the 1990s and 2000s, see Table 2.1.)

195. Mark Landler, "U.S. Officials to Continue to Engage Iran," *New York Times*, June 13, 2009.

196. Robert F. Worth, "Iran Expanding Effort to Stifle the Opposition," *New York Times*, November 24, 2009.

197. "Obama Offer is Denounced by Ayatollah," Associated Press, March 21, 2010. Iran's support of Iraqi insurgents also did not abate when Obama sought to engage Iran in 2009 (Gordon and Lehren, "Leaked Reports Detail Iran's Aid for Iraqi Militias").

198. Pragmatic conservatives also supported these policies, but reformers were more consistent in their preferences and no doubt helped persuade or pressure some conservatives to adopt the positions they did.

***Table 2.1:*** SUMMARY OF THE SUCCESSES AND FAILURES OF IDEOLOGICAL POLICIES TOWARD IRAN[1]

| | | Did Iranian Reformers Possess Significant Political Power?[2] | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | No (Iranian conservatives dominated all major political institutions) | Yes |
| **Type of Policies** | Ideological Soft Line | Failure (e.g., the European powers' policies of "Critical Dialogue" toward Iran in the 1990s; Obama's 2009 Iranian policies) | Success (e.g., the Clinton administration's Iranian policies from 1997 to 2001) |
| | Ideological Hard Line | Success (e.g., the Clinton administration's 1995-1997 Iranian policies; the Bush administration's 2006-2009 policies) | Failure (e.g., the Bush administration's 2002-2005 Iranian policies) |

1 I define "success" or "failure" in the cases in the table by whether or not the policies in question best protected Western states' interests in relation to alternative strategies toward Iran, and not whether these states' preferences were completely realized. Thus, for example, I code the Bush administration's 2006-2009 policies a success even though Iran did not abandon its nuclear weapons program in these years. The point in this example is that hard-line policies provided the U.S. the best chance of achieving its goals in these years relative to other policy options.
2 By "significant political power" I am referring to control of at least one of Iran's key political institutions, e.g., the Supreme Leadership, the presidency, the parliament, the Council of Guardians, or the IRGC.

## CONCLUSION

This chapter demonstrates the centrality of ideological variables to Iranian leaders' threat perceptions and consequent policies toward the United States from 1997 to 2009. Only an ideological understanding of international relations explains the systematic variation in perceptions and policies toward America that corresponded with Iranian leaders' factional-ideological beliefs. As Hypothesis 1 predicts, different ideological distances dividing Iranian politicians from the United States had a profound impact on their understandings of the threats to both their domestic interests and the safety of their state, and thus on core international-security decisions, including levels of animosity toward America, the development of nuclear weapons, and actions taken in the post-9/11 wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. This chapter, in other words, reveals both factional variation in threat perceptions and policies on key issues, and *why* this variation occurred: it was a product of

differences in leaders' understandings of both others' international intentions and threats of domestic-ideological subversion.

Although American power and aggressive policies contributed to tensions with Iran, these variables were not the root source of U.S.-Iranian enmity, contrary to what realists claim. Because American power and policies were identical for all Iranian leaders, these factors cannot account for the major differences in threat perceptions and policy preferences held by Iranian reformers and conservatives. Moreover, members of both these ideological groups consistently attributed Iranian-American hostilities to the states' major ideological differences, and not to U.S. power and policies. Hence, for example, conservatives' claims that America was bound to be an enemy of Iran as long as the latter maintained its Islamist ideological principles. Reformers agreed with this position, but recommended that Iran liberalize in order to end hostilities with the United States. All these views support the book's argument.

Ideological distances were also central to American leaders' views and policies toward Iran, though the Clinton and Bush administrations adopted different strategies to try to close the ideological gap with this state. Whether the ideological hard- or soft-line policies adopted by the two administrations succeeded or failed depended primarily on the political power possessed by Iran's different ideological factions. These sets of findings support the core claims of Hypotheses 3A and 3B.

The chapter's analysis and findings generate clear policy recommendations for American leaders. Most importantly, because ideological variables will likely continue to play a major role in the development of Iranian foreign policies, U.S. decision makers should do what they can to strengthen Iranian ideological reformers and weaken ideological conservatives. Both hard- and soft-line polices by the United States have in the past affected the domestic debate in Iran, and American actions can continue to do so in the future. Specifically, U.S. leaders should adopt hard-line policies—including making deterrent threats, tightening relations with regional allies, combating the Iranian government's ability to block communications among Iran's citizens and opposition groups, criticizing Iran's human rights record in an attempt to delegitimize the government, and implementing "smart" economic sanctions that target the assets, businesses, and travel privileges of Iran's hard-line leaders while trying to spare ordinary Iranian citizens—when Iranian conservatives dominate decision making. These policies are necessary in order to thwart ideological conservatives' provocations and provide reformers and pragmatists with evidence that their domestic rivals' policies are ineffective and dangerous. Military and economic containment, in short, should be implemented in the service of affecting a broader ideological struggle and the domestic-ideological contest within Iran.

American leaders must try to isolate and condemn Iran when conservatives control virtually all the levers of political power without overtly interfering in Iranian domestic politics. U.S. policymakers, in other words, should structure the international incentives confronting Iran to harm conservatives. America should not, however, become directly involved in changing Iran's domestic makeup (e.g., through assassinations or bankrolling reformist candidates for political office). Overt interference in Iranian domestic affairs could both fuel a popular nationalistic backlash and allow conservatives to paint reformers as puppets of the United States. Either development would benefit Iranian conservatives' domestic interests.

This analysis indicates that America might be in a "no win" situation in trying to affect the domestic debate in Iran. If the United States gives Iranian reformers no help, it may be missing an opportunity to weaken conservatives' domestic power. American support of reformers, though, may taint this ideological group, thereby aiding conservatives. Perhaps the solution to this dilemma is to pay close attention to what leading Iranian reformers say about how much and what kind of aid they want from the United States in order to help their cause. Many Iranian reformers, for example, advocated that the Obama administration take more forceful actions against the Iranian government after Ahmadinejad's reelection in 2009. One reformist activist told the *Los Angeles Times* in September 2009 that he welcomed more international "pressure on Ahmadinejad's government. This is good for the Green wave [i.e., reformers] in Iran and the [domestic] rift will increase for sure if pressure builds up."[199] One of the slogans that was shouted in the streets of Tehran in massive demonstrations held in November 2009 was "Obama: either with the murderers or with us."[200] The protesters, according to observers of the movement, "perceive that [Obama's] international engagement with Mr. Ahmadinejad has come at the expense of their human rights . . . Many in the Green Movement [believe] that experience has shown that Mr. Ahmadinejad is neither willing nor able to change course. Instead, they would like to see the international community exert pressure on the regime through a progressive set of smart, vigorous and targeted sanctions and more forceful advocacy of human rights."[201]

Assuming support from Iranian reformers, in order to isolate Iran without creating an anti-American, nationalistic reaction, simultaneous with the

199. Quoted in Fleishman and Mostaghim, "Disclosure of Secret Nuclear Plant Further Divides Iran's Hard-liners, Opposition."

200. Quoted in Nazenin Ansari and Jonathan Paris, "The Message from the Streets in Tehran," *New York Times*, November 6, 2009.

201. Ibid.

hard-line policies described above when Iranian conservatives control policymaking, U.S. leaders should make clear that a peaceful resolution of disputes is possible if Iran both makes progress on domestic reforms and adopts more accommodating foreign policies. Indicating that a "grand bargain" with America is possible even without a full-blown ideological revolution will further boost reformers' and pragmatists' justifications for increased power. Positive incentives, in sum, should accompany strong deterrent actions. Public diplomacy that demonstrates both that Iran's international isolation is due to the policies of hard-liners in the Iranian government and that America supports the advancement in Iran of human rights, the rule of law, and democracy is likely to stimulate the greatest domestic debate in Iran in America's favor. When Iranian reformers possess significant political power, the United States should adopt cooperative policies that support these politicians (such as trade liberalization, the unfreezing of Iranian assets, and the normalization of relations), and American leaders should be willing to match reformers' offers of détente and rapprochement as long as progress in these areas is being made.

## CHAPTER 3

# Ideologies and the History of the Syrian-Iranian Alliance

This chapter examines the factors that led to the creation of the Syrian-Iranian alliance in the 1980s, as well as those developments that strengthened and weakened this coalition from its origins through the end of George W. Bush's presidency. My primary objective is to test Hypotheses 2 and 3B, which involve, respectively, the circumstances under which ideological enemies are likely to ally and the conditions that make ideological hard- or soft-line policies more appropriate in advancing states' interests.

I find significant backing for both hypotheses. In support of Hypothesis 2, the major ideological differences dividing the Syrian and Iranian regimes created important threshold effects against alignment that required very strong incentives to overcome. Although realist balancing calculations played a role in pushing these states together, of even greater importance were the offensive, domestic, and ideological-distance incentives for alliance, which tend to be especially strong during periods of ideological multipolarity. The Middle East in the 1980s was clearly an ideologically multipolar system, divided among secular authoritarians (such as Syrian leaders), Islamists (such as those ruling in Iran), and liberals, who included both Israel and the American presence in the region. When the various forces that had pushed Syria and Iran to ally weakened, the ideological differences dividing these states' leaders became more salient to their relations, thereby leading to low points of their cooperation. These outcomes obtained even when realist balancing incentives for alliance remained largely in place.

In support of Hypothesis 3B, I find that ideological soft-line policies tended to be more effective in advancing American interests in relation to the Syrian-Iranian alliance than did hard-line actions. Soft-line policies took advantage of the opportunities that exist in ideologically multipolar systems. Specifically, more accommodating policies by U.S. leaders weakened the forces pushing Syria and Iran together, which allowed the ideological differences separating these states to become more important to their interactions. The resulting frictions between Syria and Iran benefited American interests. Soft-line policies in a condition of ideological multipolarity, in other words, enhanced the ability of U.S. policymakers to adopt successful "wedge" strategies toward their rivals in the Middle East.

## THE IDEOLOGICAL DIFFERENCES DIVIDING SYRIAN AND IRANIAN LEADERS

The ideological distance separating the secular, nationalist, and authoritarian Syrian regime from the Islamist theocracy established in Iran after the latter's revolution in 1979 was very large. As Middle East scholar Gregory Gause explains: "The Ba'thist regime in Damascus and the Islamic revolutionaries in Teheran had very little in common. Ayatallah Khumayni excoriated secular and nationalist regimes that suppressed local Islamic movements; the [Hafez al-]Asad regime was a prototype of such a regime."[1] Or, according to Eyal Zisser, "for many years, the Ba'th regime in Syria has served as the guiding light of secularism for the whole Middle East. Its nonreligious world view and its bitter struggle with the Islamist movement in the 1970s and 1980s made the government headed by Hafiz al-Asad one of the most effective barriers against the spread of radical Islam. In the place of Islam, the Syrian regime offered a romantic-secular form of Arabism . . . Basically, Arabism served as the state religion; Islam was marginalized."[2]

The large ideological differences dividing Syrian and Iranian leaders resulted in high perceptions of threat that created substantial barriers to cooperation. From 1976 to 1982, the secular Baathist regime faced a major revolutionary threat from domestic Islamist groups led by the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood. Asad's biographer Patrick Seale claims that in 1979 and 1980, the internal threat posed by the Brotherhood "held the initiative and

1. F. Gregory Gause III, "Balancing What? Threat Perception and Alliance Choice in the Gulf," *Security Studies*, Vol. 13, No. 2 (Winter 2003/4), p. 298.

2. Eyal Zisser, "Hafiz al-Asad Discovers Islam," *Middle East Quarterly* (March 1999), p. 49. See also David W. Lesch, *Missed Opportunities: Cooperation and Confrontation in the U.S.-Syrian Relationship* (Washington, DC: The Century Foundation, 2007), p. 21.

Asad seemed in greatest danger."[3] The Baath Party report of the 1985 party congress labeled the late 1970s and early 1980s as a period of "conspiracy and confrontation imposed on our region and our revolution . . . [This was] one of the most difficult and dangerous periods."[4]

The Iranian Revolution, which occurred near the height of the domestic threat posed by the Muslim Brotherhood, increased the fears of ideological subversion felt by Syrian Baathists, who naturally assumed that the success of the Iranian revolutionaries would inspire fellow Islamists to increase their efforts to overthrow their enemies. The fact that the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood greeted the Iranian Revolution as the "revolution of all Islamic movements in the world" helped to confirm this fear.[5] As Gause puts it, Syrian leaders worried that "the spread of Iranian influence and Iranian-style ideological movements . . . would threaten the Syrian regime."[6]

Syrian policymakers' fears of ideological subversion by Islamist principles played a key role in facilitating a reconciliation—albeit a brief one—with Iraq for the first half of 1979. Because the leaders of the Iranian Revolution demonstrated that they could "mobilize millions of people in a direct challenge to the government and play a key role in ousting a ruler as powerful as the shah," Syrian and Iraqi leaders agreed that they should end their hostilities and increase their security cooperation in order to address their common ideological threat.[7]

Iranian policymakers' views of Syria were also shaped by the ideological differences dividing the two states. A powerful point of view among Iranian leaders after the revolution was that Iran should have little interaction with Syria because of the secular nature of the Syrian regime. Instead, Iran should aid Islamist groups in Syria in order to help provoke a revolution in this country.[8] This view was championed by the chair of parliament's foreign affairs committee, Ahmad

3. Patrick Seale, *Asad of Syria: The Struggle for the Middle East* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), pp. 324; also pp. 332–33.

4. Quoted in Gause, "Balancing What?" p. 290. For details on the Muslim Brotherhood's major threat to the Syrian regime in 1979 and 1980, see Yvette Talhamy, "The Syrian Muslim Brothers and the Syrian-Iranian Relationship," *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 63, No. 4 (Autumn 2009), pp. 567–71.

5. Quoted in Yosef Olmert, "Iranian-Syrian Relations: Between Islam and Realpolitik," in David Menashri, ed., *The Iranian Revolution and the Muslim World* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1990), p. 173. See also Talhamy, "The Syrian Muslim Brothers and the Syrian-Iranian Relationship," p. 569.

6. Gause, "Balancing What?" p. 298.

7. William Branigin, "Events in Iran, Lebanon Spur Iraq-Syria Unification Plan," *Washington Post,* January 30, 1979; also "Tension with Iran Increasing; Two Presidents Meet on Merging Syria and Iraq," *The Globe and Mail* (Canada), June 18, 1979. The increased threat posed by Israel to Syria and Iraq after Egypt's signing of the Camp David Accords also played a role in this reconciliation (see ibid.).

8. Olmert, "Iranian-Syrian Relations," p. 173.

Azizi.[9] Although advocates of this position lost out to those Iranian leaders who were willing to cooperate with Syria, they remained a force to be taken into account. Moreover, even for those Iranian policymakers in the early 1980s who were willing to align with Syria, ideological differences created hostility toward this state that shaped decision making at key times. As a result of these dynamics, the Syrian-Iranian alliance, in the words of one authority (writing in 1993), "has not been that of a stable and untroubled partnership. On the contrary, even at the best of times, the partnership has been a limited and often troubled one. Syrian-Iranian relations . . . have been strained because of certain underlying incompatibilities in their respective interests . . . and in the political ideologies underpinning . . . their respective governments."[10]

## THE ORIGINS OF THE SYRIAN-IRANIAN ALLIANCE

The Syrian-Iranian alliance is sometimes described as the triumph of realpolitik over ideology.[11] Specifically, Iraq's attack on Iran in September 1980 confronted both Iran and Syria with an immediate and major common threat to their security that needed to be balanced against with all available allies regardless of ideological considerations.

This realist explanation of the origins of the Syrian-Iranian alliance has important elements of truth. The war with Iraq obviously placed Iran's security in a highly precarious position. Syrian interests were also at risk. Before the war began, Syrian-Iraqi relations were hostile (except for relatively brief efforts in 1979 to increase cooperation in order to address the shared subversive threat posed by the Iranian Revolution).[12] If Iraq had

9. Jubin M. Goodarzi, *Syria and Iran: Diplomatic Alliance and Power Politics in the Middle East* (London: Tauris Academic Studies, 2006), p. 178; Hussein J. Agha and Ahmad S. Khalidi, *Syria and Iran: Rivalry and Cooperation* (London: Pinter Publishers, 1995), p. 113.

10. Shireen T. Hunter, "Iran and Syria: From Limited Hostility to Limited Alliance," in Hooshang Amirahmadi and Nader Entessar, eds., *Iran and the Arab World* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993), p. 198.

11. Stephen M. Walt, *Revolution and War* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996), p. 249; Christin Marschall, "Syria-Iran: A Strategic Alliance, 1979–1991," *Orient*, Vol. 33, No. 3 (September 1992), p. 433; Gause, "Balancing What?" p. 298.

12. Enmity between the Baathist Syrian and Iraqi regimes clearly does not support my argument. The two states were very similar ideologically, yet had high perceptions of threat. Iraqi and Syrian leaders did have negotiations about allying and even unifying their states based on ideological similarities, but these discussions came to naught. Syrian-Iraqi relations are an example of a particular ideological content leading to international hostilities with fellow believers. When an ideology calls for a single leader of a transnational ideological group—as Baathist pan-Arabism did—there will very likely be competition among different proponents of this ideology in order to be this leader. In this case, ideological similarities among states were more a source of conflict than of cooperation. See Stephen M. Walt, *The Origins of Alliances* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987), pp. 35–36.

been able to defeat Iran, Saddam Hussein's military would have been free to threaten Syria with a significantly reduced risk of a second front from Iraq's east. In this highly threatening environment, both Iran and Syria were willing to lay aside their ideological differences and ally in order to best protect their states' physical security from a clear and present danger.[13]

The problem for realist balancing explanations of the origins of the Syrian-Iranian alliance is that this coalition was created in the summer of 1979, which was more than a year before Iraq invaded Iran.[14] Syria and Iran at this time pledged mutual aid against common enemies, chiefly Israel. Iran in August 1979 even sent troops to Syria to aid in the conflict with Israel.[15] For their part, Syrian leaders in 1979 tried to defuse tensions between Iran and Arab Gulf states, and they supported Iran during the major international crisis that occurred after Iran's seizure of the American embassy in Tehran in November 1979.[16] Pointing out that the Syrian-Iranian alliance existed well before Iraq's invasion of Iran does not mean that mutual fear of Iraq did not play some role in pushing Syria and Iran together in 1979.[17] These calculations, though, were not the most important ones in the creation of the alliance. Paradoxically, it was the ideological changes that resulted from the Iranian Revolution that first pushed Syrian and Iranian leaders to set aside their ideological differences and ally. Moreover, the alliance reached its high point in the early 1980s in response to events unrelated to external balancing calculations, specifically a major domestic-ideological challenge to the Syrian regime in 1982. These findings support an assertion made in chapter 1: alliances among ideological enemies do not necessarily demonstrate the accuracy of realist theories even though these outcomes look "realist."

Ideologies were central to the origins of the Syrian-Iranian alliance because the condition of ideological multipolarity helped to make the ideological-distance and offensive (and eventually the domestic) incentives for alliance especially strong. Both the ideological-distance and offensive

13. For details on the aid Syria provided Iran during the first eighteen months of the Iran-Iraq War, see Marschall, "Syria-Iran," p. 437; Goodarzi, *Syria and Iran*, pp. 35, 43; Olmert, "Iranian-Syrian Relations," p. 174.

14. Marschall, "Syria-Iran," p. 437; Anoushiravan Ehteshami and Raymond A. Hinnebusch, *Syria and Iran: Middle Powers in a Penetrated Regional System* (London: Routledge, 1997), p. 90.

15. "Iranian Troops 'To Take up Positions' on Syria's Confrontation Lines with Israel," BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, August 17, 1979.

16. Goodarzi, *Syria and Iran*, pp. 23–27.

17. See Goodarzi, *Syria and Iran*, pp. 19, 26.

incentives were primarily directed against a shared ideological enemy of Syria and the Islamic Republic of Iran: Israel.[18]

Before 1979, Iran under the rule of the Shah was the Middle Eastern state that was the most supportive of Israel. This brought Iran into conflict with Syrian leaders, who both feared Israeli power and wanted to put sufficient pressure on Israel to regain territories, known as the Golan Heights, that were lost in the 1967 Six-Day War.[19]

The ideological changes created by the revolution affected in major ways Iran's relations with both Syria and Israel. Although the ideological distance dividing Iranian and Syrian leaders after the revolution was large, this event also created key ideological commonalities between the two groups. Most importantly, both Syrian and Iranian policymakers shared an intense *ideological* hostility to Israel that was rooted in common anti-Zionist beliefs. It was this shared ideological commitment to anti-Zionism—and not just Israeli power—that pushed both sets of policymakers to view Israel as an enemy. If Syrian and Iranian leaders had possessed different ideological beliefs (e.g., if the revolution in Iran had never happened)—or if Israel had not been a Jewish state—perceptions of Israel most likely would have been very different even if Israeli power were the same. Syria, for example, would have wanted the Golan Heights returned from any type of state that occupied this territory. But the fact that Israel was a Jewish state, combined with Syrian leaders' commitment to anti-Zionism and "Arab revival"[20] meant that hostilities toward Israel were much more intense than would have been the case in different ideological conditions. Israel, in short, was viewed as a particularly dangerous and aggressive state because of its domestic identity. Patrick Seale, who, as Asad's semi-official biographer, has particularly good insight into the Syrian dictator's mind, asserts that Asad by the late 1970s had come to view Israel as "irredeemably aggressive and expansionist, seeking nothing less than regional mastery and Arab capitulation. With such a neighbor peace could no longer be realistically envisaged." Ideological differences between Israel and its neighbors were

18. Some analysts assert that Shiism provided a link for cooperation between predominantly Shia Iran and leaders of the Syrian government, many of whom are Alawis (an offshoot of Shiism). Prominent scholars refute this position. As Gause explains, "while Asad's regime is sociologically 'Alawi in some sense, it is hardly ideologically Shi'i, or Islamic, at all," and thus not central to Syrian-Iranian relations (Gause, "Balancing What?" p. 298, note 86). See also Ehteshami and Hinnebusch, *Syria and Iran*, pp. 98–99; Lesch, *Missed Opportunities,* p. 21.

19. For details on these points, see Hunter, "Iran and Syria," pp. 206–07; and Ehteshami and Hinnebusch, *Syria and Iran*, pp. 88–89.

20. Seale, *Asad of Syria,* p. 492.

central to these extreme threat perceptions. Israel, to Asad, was "a foreign body in Arab Asia . . . which could not live [peacefully] in an Arab environment."[21]

The importance of anti-Zionism to both Iranian and Syrian policymakers represents a blurring of the distinction between what I have labeled "ideological content" (or the international dimension of leaders' ideological beliefs) and "ideological distance." On one hand, anti-Zionism was an expression of ideological content because it prescribed specific foreign policies: hostility toward Israel. Although ideologies were the source of this enmity, the prescriptions associated with the international component of leaders' ideological beliefs go beyond my argument.

On the other hand, shared commitment to anti-Zionism was also an expression of ideological distance, because the sources of anti-Zionism for both Syrian and Iranian leaders were a product of a clash of particular *domestic* ideological beliefs. Anti-Zionism was based on opposition to Israel as a Jewish homeland. A state in the territory of Palestine that was dedicated to a different domestic principle would not have elicited the same threat from surrounding countries. Moreover, Syrian and Iranian leaders' anti-Zionism was to a great degree an outgrowth of the Syrians' pan-Arabist and the Iranians' pan-Islamist objectives.[22] These sets of beliefs were, in fact, inextricably related. Pan-Arabism and pan-Islamism required dedication to anti-Zionism. A commitment to unify the Arab or Islamic world necessarily meant hostility to a Jewish state in the Middle East. Both pan-Arabists and pan-Islamists fundamentally mixed international and domestic goals. Proponents of both sought to replace the existing Middle Eastern states system (which was an international objective) with a unified Arab or Islamist superstate that eliminated "foreign" (largely Western) influences, which were statements about domestic politics.[23] Thus from a pan-Arabist or pan-Islamist perspective, the destruction of Israel was in part a domestic goal. This outcome represented the *removal of an ideological rival* (i.e., a Western, Jewish state) *from within* a unified community (either Arabic or Islamic). Opposition to Jewish state in the Middle East was thus a shared vision for ordering *both* domestic

21. Seale, *Asad of Syria,* p. 345. See also Robert G. Rabil, *Embattled Neighbors: Syria, Israel, and Lebanon* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2003), p. 32. The importance of Israel's identity to Middle Eastern international relations is revealed by the fact that Muslim-majority states have consistently refused to consider aligning with it despite frequent major power incentives to do so. See Gause, "Balancing What?" p. 303.

22. Agha and Khalidi, *Syria and Iran*, pp. 40–41; Walt, *Revolution and War*, pp. 214–15, 223. Seale, *Asad of Syria*, pp. 185–86, 337, 345, 350–51, 492.

23. I thank John Owen for helping me develop this analysis.

and international politics that pan-Arabists and pan-Islamists shared, despite their other differences.[24]

When two ideological rivals possess, despite their ideological differences, an important area of ideological agreement in relation to a third ideological group, the former confront ideological-distance incentives to ally. Ideological similarities in one area may push leaders to set aside their ideological differences in others. These incentives among otherwise ideological rivals exist only during eras of ideological multipolarity.

This logic goes far in explaining why Syrian and Iranian leaders allied in 1979 despite their substantial ideological differences. Both Iranian and Syrian decision makers explicitly recognized that it was the ideological changes created by the revolution that altered their alliance portfolios by creating shared feelings of enmity toward Israel. Syrian leaders, for example, repeatedly referred to Iran after the revolution as an ally because of their Iranian counterparts' newly created anti-Zionist beliefs, which they now shared with Syria. In an October 1979 statement, Asad said that "the Iranian revolution is our revolution and its victory is a victory for the Arabs and Muslims against Israel and Zionism."[25] Syrian Foreign Minister Abd al-Halim Khaddam stated in August 1979 that the Iranian Revolution was a positive "step in restoring the balance [of power] . . . against the Zionist enemy."[26] In March 1980, Information Minister Ahmad Iskandar Ahmad articulated the Syrian position explaining the basis for his state's alliance with Iran: "We appreciate the role of the Iranian revolution and we are establishing the closest possible relations with it in various fields . . . We believe that establishing good relations with the Iranian revolution and supporting that revolution . . . is the duty of every Arab who believes that Israel and US imperialism are the danger to be faced."[27] Iranian leaders reciprocated these

24. Although pan-Arabism had declined in importance to Syrian leaders by the late 1970s, it still played at this time an important role in Asad's views of Israel, Palestine, and Jordan. In 1982, Asad explained to Yasser Arafat his beliefs that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict was for him at heart a domestic issue based on pan-Arabist principles: "There is no Palestinian People or Palestinian entity, there is only Syria, and Palestine is an integral, unseparated part of Syria." In 1981, the Syrian dictator declared that "Jordan was established on a part of the Syrian lands, on part of the Syrian body. We and Jordan are [note the present tense] one state, one people, one thing." According to Asad's defense minister in a 2000 statement: "Assad believed in the unity of the peoples of these Lands, which are all Arab lands. This is why Palestine and Jordan were just as important for him as Syria. Assad's declaration [in 1976] that the Golan Heights are in the middle of Syria and not on its border stemmed from his unwillingness to accept or recognize the Sykes-Picot Agreement and the artificial borders that were . . . based on it." All quotations in Eyal Zisser, "Who's Afraid of Syrian Nationalism? National and State Identity in Syria," *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 42, No. 2 (March 2006), p. 187. Also see Agha and Khalidi, *Syria and Iran*, p. 41.

25. Quoted in Marschall, "Syria-Iran," p. 434.

26. Quoted in Goodarzi, *Syria and Iran*, p. 23.

27. Quoted in Goodarzi, *Syria and Iran*, p. 29.

views. According to Iran's Foreign Minister, Ali Akbar Velayati, in a 1982 statement: "Our close relations with the regional progressive countries stem from their revolutionary, anti-imperialist, anti-Zionist and anti-reactionary stands. We are convinced that the ties and the solidarity [with Syria and Libya] are a strategic bond."[28]

It is worth emphasizing that this shared hostility toward Israel was not at root a product of realist material calculations. It was only after the ideological changes initiated by the Iranian Revolution that Israel became an enemy of Iran. There was nothing inevitable about this outcome. If Iran had not experienced an Islamist revolution, an alliance with Syria in 1979 would have been extremely unlikely. As the Syrian government explained in a 1982 official statement, it was the Iranian "revolution [that] turned the Iranian people and capabilities from an alliance with Israel and enemies [with Arabs] into an alliance with the Arabs, struggling with us against Zionism."[29]

The scholars Ehteshami and Hinnebusch describe the major international shifts that resulted from the ideological changes of the Iranian Revolution, including the important ideological agreement between Syrian and Iranian leaders, as follows: "The ideological transformation of Iran's elite by the Islamic revolution turned the Shah's foreign policy on its head. The Islamic revolution had a mission throughout the Middle East, of which anti-Zionism and anti-imperialism were central components." Summarizing, they write: "Syria was an unsuitable ideological partner for the Shah and Israel was anathema for Khomeini. Conversely, the shared anti-imperialism and anti-Zionist ideology of Ba'thist Syria and Islamic Iran facilitated their alignment."[30]

A second set of forces that pushed Syria and Iran into an alliance in the year after the revolution is related to, but distinct from, the ideological-distance incentives for alignment. Both Syrian and Iranian leaders possessed major offensive international objectives in this period, largely directed against Israel. Once again, ideological multipolarity facilitated Syrian-Iranian alignment because both states could direct their ambitions against a shared ideological foe. Although offensive goals are central to prominent realist theories, the key point is that it was the ideological changes brought about by the Iranian Revolution that created many of Syria's and Iran's shared revisionist aims.

A preeminent foreign policy objective of Syria after the 1967 Six-Day War with Israel was to regain control of the Golan Heights, which Israel had

28. Quoted in Goodarzi, *Syria and Iran*, p. 163; see also pp. 21–22, 74, 126, 197, 245.

29. Quoted in Goodarzi, *Syria and Iran*, p. 74.

30. Ehteshami and Hinnebusch, *Syria and Iran*, pp. 89, 113, respectively. See also Marschall, "Syria-Iran," pp. 433–34.

captured and occupied. In the late 1970s, Asad's ability to achieve this goal diminished substantially. In 1978, Egypt signed the Camp David Accords with Israel, which stipulated that Israel return the Sinai Peninsula to Egypt's control (this territory had also been captured during the 1967 war). In exchange, Egypt promised both to recognize Israel and have peaceful relations with it. The result of the accords for Syria's interests was that the other state that most shared Syria's revisionist objectives toward Israel was now mostly satisfied with the territorial status quo. This outcome both increased Syria's strategic vulnerability in relation to Israel and denied Syria a probable ally against Israel to regain the occupied territories. This latter development reduced the pressure that Syria was able to bring to bear on Israel to surrender the Golan Heights.

Syria's diminishing chances of satisfying its revisionist territorial objectives played an important role in inclining its leaders, alone of all Middle Eastern Arab states, to ally with theocratic Iran.[31] Asad understood very soon after the revolution that the ideological changes created by this event could help him realize his offensive international goals. Iranian leaders' anti-Zionist beliefs made it likely, according to Asad in 1980, that the Iranians would "support the Arabs . . . for the sake of liberating our lands."[32] Syria's information minister, Ahmad Iskandar Ahmad, made the identical point in March 1980: "We believe that . . . supporting [the Iranian] revolution so [Iran] can . . . devote time to help the Arabs liberate their occupied territories is the duty of every Arab who believes that Israel and US imperialism are the danger to be faced."[33]

Asad also possessed a preeminent interest in expanding Syrian influence in Lebanon.[34] To Syria's president, "Lebanon's territory was . . . crucial for both defensive, and offensive purposes."[35] The greater Syrian power in Lebanon became, the more pressure the Asad regime could bring to bear on Israel while preventing Israel from doing the same to Syria.

Iran after the revolution also possessed offensive objectives that its leaders hoped to advance by allying with Syria. Most importantly, the alliance

31. I label Syrian leaders' interest in reacquiring the Golan Heights a "revisionist" or "offensive" goal (even though the Syrians view the territory to be part of their country) because 1) this objective required a major change in the existing territorial status quo, and 2) this goal was to an important degree (though not completely) independent of Syrian fears of Israel. The Syrians would have wanted the return of the Golan Heights even if Israel were not a security threat. Consequently, balancing incentives for alliance were not the only ones that were in play as the Syrians attempted to reacquire the lost territory.

32. Quoted in Ehteshami and Hinnebusch, *Syria and Iran*, p. 93.

33. Quoted in Goodarzi, *Syria and Iran*, p. 29.

34. For details, see Itamar Rabinovich, *The View From Damascus: State, Political Community and Foreign Relations in Twentieth-Century Syria* (London: Vallentine Mitchell, 2008), ch. 16; Agha and Khalidi, *Syria and Iran*, p. 42.

35. Rabinovich, *The View From Damascus*, p. 247.

increased the chances that Iran would be able both to "liberate" Palestine from Israeli control and spread its ideological system to other states, including a liberated Palestine. The Iranian revolutionaries from the time they assumed power claimed both goals to be central to their foreign policies. Security concerns played a major role in creating the interest in spreading Islamist principles to other countries, as Hypothesis 3A predicts. Khomeini argued that failure to export the revolution would leave Iran vulnerable to its ideological enemies. Once in power, he declared that the new Iranian government must "try to export our revolution to the world . . . If we remain in an enclosed environment we shall definitely face defeat." Because of the high threat posed by ideological rivals, Iran, to Khomeini, "in reality . . . [had] no choice but to . . . overthrow all treacherous, corrupt, oppressive, and criminal regimes."[36] A core component of the Iranians' objective of spreading their ideological principles throughout the Middle East was the destruction of Israel. In August 1979, for example, Khomeini announced that Iran would annually celebrate a "Jerusalem Day." The day is meant to commemorate the desire and intent to overthrow the "Zionist regime."[37]

It was not until 1982 that the alliance with Syria became especially useful to Iran in realizing these offensive goals, for reasons I detail below. As early as August 1979, however, the Iranian government sent troops to Syria to take up positions against Israel in an effort to show solidarity for Israel's destruction.[38] These revisionist objectives were ones that were entirely created by the revolution (again, Israel and Iran were friendly before this event). Without the ideological changes in Iran beginning in 1979, incentives to ally with Syria would have been considerably lower.

Although the Syrian-Iranian alliance was created in 1979 in response to ideological distance and offensive incentives for cooperation, and reinforced in response to the Iraq-Iran War that began in 1980, events in 1982 further solidified this coalition. The first of these developments occurred in the spring of 1982, when Syria significantly expanded its aid to Iran. This change did not correspond with shifts in relative power in Iraq's favor during the Iran-Iraq War, which realist accounts of the Syrian-Iranian alliance would emphasize. Iranian forces were performing very well in 1982, so much so that by May of this year Iraq was forced to retreat from most of the

36. Both quotations in Walt, *Revolution and War*, pp. 215 and 214, respectively. See also ibid., 223, 239, 241–42, 258; Ehteshami and Hinnebusch, *Syria and Iran*, pp. 90, 122–23; David Armstrong, *Revolution and World Order: The Revolutionary State in International Society* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), pp. 193–94; Ray Takeyh, *Guardians of the Revolution: Iran and the World in the Age of the Ayatollahs* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), pp. 18, 20–21, 26, 28.

37. "Jerusalem Day in Iran," BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, August 18, 1979.

38. "Iranian Troops 'To Take up Positions' on Syria's Confrontation Lines with Israel."

Iranian territories that it had originally conquered.[39] Consequently, from a power standpoint, there was less urgency for Syria to help Iran in the spring of 1982 than during the first eighteen months of the war. Yet it was precisely at this time that the Syrian government tightened its alliance with Iran and took more aggressive actions against Iraq.

Instead of resulting from changes in relative power, Syria's significant increase in aid to Iran in the spring of 1982 was the result of the creation of a third prominent condition that not only pushes states to ally, but tends to be an especially powerful force for interideological alignment during periods of ideological multipolarity: the need to defeat a pressing *domestic* ideological enemy.

As discussed above, in the late 1970s and early 1980s Asad's regime faced a major domestic challenge from Sunni Islamists led by the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood. The Brotherhood from 1976 to 1982 mounted a violent struggle to try to overthrow the Syrian government and establish an Islamist state. The culmination of this revolt occurred in February 1982, when Syrian forces murdered thousands of Islamist insurgents in Hama, Syria's fourth largest city.

The relationship between the massacre at Hama and Asad's decision to move closer to Iran is unmistakable. As one Western diplomat told the Associated Press in May 1982, "the Hama fighting had a major impact on pushing Syria into [closer] alignment with Iran" and significantly increasing the extent of the two states' cooperation.[40] In March 1982, one month after the killings at Hama, Syria and Iran signed a ten-year economic agreement. The treaty committed Syria to export to Iran phosphate, agricultural products, and textiles in exchange for oil from Iran. Military weapons from Syria were also likely part of the agreement.[41] Perhaps of even greater importance to Iran, in April the Syrians agreed to cut off the pipelines that transported Iraqi oil through Syria to the Mediterranean Sea. The result was a major blow to Iraq's economy, depriving it of the revenue from the sale of 700,000 barrels of oil a day.[42] This setback significantly damaged Iraq's ability to finance its war with Iran.

Asad clearly hoped that increased cooperation with Iran would help in his domestic struggle with Islamists. Part of this change was no doubt

39. Yair Hirschfeld, "The Odd Couple: Ba'athist Syria and Khomeini's Iran," in Moshe Ma'oz and Avner Yaniv, eds., *Syria Under Assad: Domestic Constraints and Regional Risks* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1986), p. 110.

40. Quoted in Nicolas B. Tatro, "Closer Syrian-Iranian Ties Seen in Wake of Hama Rebellion," The Associated Press, May 13, 1982.

41. Marschall, "Syria-Iran," pp. 443–44.

42. Olmert, "Iranian-Syrian Relations," p. 175; Ehteshami and Hinnebusch, *Syria and Iran*, p. 95.

designed to put pressure on Iraq to stop aiding the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood, which the Iraqi regime had done from 1980 to 1982 as a means of weakening the Asad government.[43] Terminating Iraqi support of the Brotherhood would not, however, have ended this revolutionary threat, which was for the most part domestically driven and independent of foreign support.

Some scholars have argued that Asad moved closer to Iran in 1982 in order to bolster Syria's religious credentials. This outcome, it was hoped, would diminish the opposition from Syrian fundamentalist groups. Allying with an Islamist regime abroad, in other words, would reduce the threat from Islamist parties at home.[44]

But there is a major problem with the assertion that Iranian policymakers' ideological prestige could convince the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood, which was the major threat to the secular Syrian state, to end its opposition to this regime. Syrian Sunni and Iranian Shia Islamists in this period tended to view one another as ideological competitors, not allies. Although the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood originally greeted the Iranian Revolution with admiration, this was an aberration. Hostility between the Brotherhood and the Iranian revolutionaries was the dominant tendency, and it is the one that prevailed at the time of the Hama massacre. As one scholar of Middle Eastern politics explains, "the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood . . . historically . . . opposed Khomeini's brand of Islamic fundamentalism. Khomeini and his followers . . . found very little appeal among the leadership of the Brotherhood as well as its rank and file."[45]

Iranian leaders reciprocated this hostility. According to the former Iranian president, Abolhassan Bani-Sadr, there was a consensus among Iran's policymakers in the early 1980s that the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood "had compromised its Islamic credentials by forging close links with Jordan and Iraq, and had become a 'stooge of the West.'"[46] In December 1980, Iranian Prime Minister Mohammad Ali Raja'i, for example, condemned the party as "a gang which masqueraded under the guise of religion."[47]

Because Iranian leaders lacked the capacity to use their ideological credentials to persuade Syrian Sunni Islamists to cease their attacks against the secular Syrian regime, a more plausible explanation for why Asad pushed for a tightening of Syria's alliance with Iran immediately

43. Gause, "Balancing What?" p. 291.

44. Hirschfeld, "The Odd Couple," p. 116; Agha and Khalidi, *Syria and Iran*, p. 13; Marschall, "Syria-Iran," p. 443.

45. Hirschfeld, "The Odd Couple," p. 116. Also Marschall, "Syria-Iran," p. 443, note 48.

46. Quoted in Goodarzi, *Syria and Iran*, p. 300, note 94.

47. Quoted in Goodarzi, *Syria and Iran*, p. 43.

after the Hama massacre has to do with the transfer of resources. As part of the Syrian-Iranian trade agreement of 1982, Iranian leaders committed to the free delivery to Syria of one million tons of oil per year, or roughly $200,000,000 worth. Iran also subsidized other oil shipments to Syria and allowed the latter to pay for them in barter. These arrangements saved Syria another $150,000,000 to $200,000,000 annually.[48] This major transfer of resources to Syria provided its government the financial wherewithal both to crush the Muslim Brotherhood and to buy off potential sympathizers.

In sum, although the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood and Iranian leaders were both Islamists (though one was Sunni, the other Shia), they viewed one another as ideological rivals, not allies. This fact created incentives for Syrian leaders to tighten their alliance with Iran according to the "domestic" incentives for alignment that exist in ideologically multipolar systems. The Syrian government used its alliance with one ideological enemy abroad to provide the resources necessary to better defeat another ideological threat at home.

After the Hama massacre, another major event in 1982 that strengthened the Syrian-Iranian alliance was Israel's June 1982 invasion of Lebanon. The primary objectives of the invasion were to uproot the PLO from its Lebanese base and remove Lebanon from Syria's sphere of influence and place it within the U.S.-Israeli orbit. The U.S. also placed troops in Lebanon in 1982 as part of a multinational force, the main purpose of which was to evacuate the PLO from Lebanon.

Israel's invasion of Lebanon created additional major power threats to Syria's core security interests, which resulted in new balancing incentives to increase cooperation with all available allies. The invasion allowed Israeli forces to outflank Syrian defenses, thus forcing Syria to defend a much longer border against one of its principal enemies. The invasion might also have allowed Israel to install a pro-Western government in Lebanon, which would have reduced Syria's influence in a state that provided it defense in depth against its enemies.[49]

The alliance with Iran helped ease these threats. On the day after the Israeli invasion, a high-ranking Iranian military and political delegation arrived in Syria to offer Iran's support.[50] By July, one thousand of Iran's Revolutionary Guards had been sent to Lebanon to aid in the resistance.[51]

Syrian leaders' interest in tightening their country's alliance with Iran after Israel's invasion of Lebanon is consistent with realpolitik behavior.

48. Hirschfeld, "The Odd Couple," pp. 112–13.
49. Agha and Khalidi, *Syria and Iran*, p. 17.
50. Olmert, "Iranian-Syrian Relations," p. 180.
51. Marschall, "Syria-Iran," p. 439.

Given the substantial threats to Syrian security created by this event, it is fair to say that the Syrian government would likely have welcomed aid from any regime, regardless of ideological orientation.

Despite this claim, it is a mistake to view the solidification of the Syrian-Iranian alliance after 1982 as the triumph of realist over ideological calculations. To begin with, although Syrian opposition to Israel after the latter's invasion of Lebanon was driven largely by realpolitik considerations, Iran's was not. Without the Iranian theocracy's ideological commitment to anti-Zionism and an interest in spreading the ideological principles of the revolution throughout the Middle East, it is extremely unlikely that Iran would have joined forces with Syria against Israel (especially since Iran was still at war with Iraq, which made military resources scarce and not to be used except for highly valued ends). Outcomes would have been very different, for example, if the Shah still governed Iran in the early 1980s. Iran's enmity to Israel in these years was due to ideological calculations, not realist balancing ones.

Second, although the Syrian government most likely would have welcomed aid against Israel from any state, regardless of ideological beliefs, the ideological identity of the Islamic Republic of Iran made this state a particularly effective ally for Syria. Iran provided Syria greater access to Lebanese Shiites, especially those with Islamist leanings, who were most ideologically opposed to Israel and the United States.[52] This group, many of whom would eventually found and join the aggressive Islamist militia Hizbollah, were central to the resistance against Israeli forces within Lebanon. Hizbollah was highly committed, at a minimum, to the withdrawal of Israeli forces from Lebanon, and perhaps even the destruction of Israel itself. Syria helped to train this and other militias, provided logistical support, and facilitated the transfer of arms from Iran to Lebanon. By joining forces with Hizbollah and similar groups, Syria was able to help coordinate such an effective resistance (which included the use of suicide bombing and terrorist attacks) that U.S. forces left Lebanon in 1984. In 1985, Israel withdrew its forces to a buffer zone in southern Lebanon.

The same factors that made Iran particularly useful to Syria in repelling Israel's invasion of Lebanon and deterring an Israeli attack on Syria—primarily access to Islamist Lebanese militias—also made Iran useful to Syria in achieving its core revisionist international objectives: reacquiring the Golan Heights and increasing Syrian influence in Lebanon. Asad hoped that the pressure that these militant groups would bring to bear on Israel would force the Israeli army both to leave Lebanon *and* to surrender the Golan Heights in exchange for Syria's termination of support of Israel's

52. Goodarzi, *Syria and Iran*, pp. 19, 75; Agha and Khalidi, *Syria and Iran*, pp. 15, 18.

enemies.[53] Reflecting these offensive and defensive objectives, Asad referred to Syria's support of Lebanese Islamist militias, in conjunction with Syria's alliance with Iran, as his "sword and shield" strategy.[54]

Offensive international goals, including rolling back Israeli power and spreading the Iranian ideological system to other states, were also fundamental motives behind Iranian leaders' decision to support the resistance in Lebanon. Rolling back Israel's power had always been an important objective of the revolutionary regime. Its leaders had portrayed themselves as the champions of all Muslims, particularly against Zionist and Western imperialist forces. The alliance with Syria and the consequent support of Islamist militias against Israel in Lebanon helped Iran demonstrate its revolutionary credentials, which Iranian policymakers hoped would translate into increased influence throughout the region.[55] Foreign Minister Velayati, for example, stated that "the only way we can fight the Zionist regime is through our aid to Syria, to the Palestinians and to the Muslim groups in Lebanon who are determined to fight on. If we fail in this, we will be ridiculed all over the world as do-nothing phrase-mongers."[56]

The war in Lebanon also provided Iran a greater opportunity to spread its ideological system in the region. As Iran's ambassador to Lebanon, Hojjatoleslam Fakhr Rouhani, explained: "[Lebanon is] a platform from which different ideas have been directed to the rest of the Arab world," and "an Islamic movement in that country will result in Islamic movements throughout the Arab world."[57] Or, as the Iranian Speaker of Parliament, Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, declared in December 1983: "[T]he export of the Islamic revolution . . . is exactly what is taking place in Lebanon."[58] Offensive, ideologically based goals were, in sum, at the heart of Iran's policies on this issue.

This section's analysis supports the main predictions of Hypothesis 2. I have made two main points. First, the major ideological differences separating Syrian and Iranian leaders created barriers to cooperation that required very strong incentives to overcome. At the time the alliance was formed in 1979, Syrian and Iranian policymakers confronted both ideological distance and offensive reasons to ally. Events over the next three years (e.g., Iraq's invasion of Iran, the massacre at Hama, and Israel's invasion of

53. Goodarzi, *Syria and Iran*, pp. 21, 29, 31, 35, 74, 79.

54. Quoted in Goodarzi, *Syria and Iran*, p. 75.

55. Goodarzi, *Syria and Iran*, pp. 77, 87–88, 118–19, 256; Agha and Khalidi, *Syria and Iran*, pp. 35–36.

56. Quoted in Goodarzi, *Syria and Iran*, p. 119.

57. Quoted in Ehteshami and Hinnebusch, *Syria and Iran*, p. 123.

58. Quoted in Marschall, "Syria-Iran," p. 439. See also Goodarzi, *Syria and Iran*, pp. 77, 87–88, 118; Ehteshami and Hinnebusch, *Syria and Iran*, pp. 90, 122–23.

Lebanon) would add powerful balancing and domestic incentives for alignment. Thus with regards to the four primary sources of alliance in the literature discussed in chapter 1 (balancing, offensive, domestic, and ideological-distance), Iranian leaders by 1982 confronted three of these sets of incentives (balancing against a pressing domestic threat was the only one missing). Syrian leaders confronted all four.

Second, although realist considerations of balancing against material threats were a key factor leading to the reinforcement of the Syrian-Iranian alliance, this coalition had started to form in response to the ideological changes resulting from the Iranian Revolution. The alliance subsequently tightened to a great extent in reaction to both domestic-ideological threats in Syria and opportunities to realize revisionist international goals. Ideological-distance, offensive, and domestic incentives for alliance were all made possible or strengthened by the fact that Syrian and Iranian leaders shared an ideological enemy in an ideologically multipolar system. Thus, despite the huge ideological differences dividing Syrian and Iranian leaders, ideological considerations were, paradoxically, of central importance to their cooperation.

## THE RESURFACING OF IDEOLOGICAL DIFFERENCES AND THE WEAKENING OF THE ALLIANCE, 1984–96

Although powerful forces pushed Syrian and Iran into an alliance in the early 1980s, ideological differences between the two states also continued to push them apart. Indeed, from roughly 1984 to 1996, the centrifugal effects created by ideological differences were so strong that the alliance nearly ended, despite the continued existence of incentives to remain in tight cooperation.

As I explained in chapter 1, coalitions of ideological rivals are comprised of states that are at the same time allies and enemies. These conflicting sentiments will often create massive strains that will make these coalitions more unreliable and fragile than other types of alliances. Syrian-Iranian relations in the 1980s and 1990s support these claims. Asad, for example, described Iraq's 1980 attack on Iran as "the wrong war against the wrong enemy at the wrong time" (Israel was the "right enemy" in Asad's mind).[59] The Syrian dictator, in other words, considered Iran an enemy, just not as immediate a threat as Israel. Similarly, there were powerful factions in Iran, led by the chair of parliament's foreign affairs committee, Ahmad Azizi, who

59. Quoted in Goodarzi, *Syria and Iran*, p. 35.

opposed the alliance with Syria because it did not sufficiently advance the revolutionary cause.[60] Moreover, even for those Iranian leaders who were willing to ally with Syria, ideological differences created latent animosity. Necessity superseded, but did not remove, these negative views. According to the scholar Yosef Olmert, those in Iran who advocated alliance with Syria argued that "the surrounding world was like a 'filthy swamp,' and Iran therefore, needed 'some stepping stones in this contaminated swamp.' One such 'stepping stone' could be a temporary alliance with Syria. It was necessary because the Islamic Republic needed allies, yet was bound to be temporary, because Syria was a secular state."[61]

The most important sources of ideological frictions between Syria and Iran in the 1980s and 1990s involved the future political status of Lebanon and the peace process with Israel.[62] Although neither Syrian nor Iranian leaders wanted to see Israeli or American influence increase in Lebanon, the two groups intensely disagreed over their preferences for Lebanon's political future. Iranian policymakers wanted to see an Islamist state established in Lebanon with Hizbollah at its head, but Syria's leaders believed this outcome would minimize Syrian influence in the state and perhaps even help to undermine Syria's secular regime.[63] As a result of these concerns, Syria championed in Lebanon a secular, religiously pluralist order. On a number of occasions in the 1980s, Syria's military and some of its main Lebanese allies, led by the militia known as Amal, clashed directly with Hizbollah.[64] As early as May 1984, Syrian forces began to forcibly disarm and arrest Hizbollah members as part of a strategy to get the latter to evacuate strategically vital regions in Lebanon.[65] The tensions resulting from these policies accelerated over the rest of the decade, especially after Israeli forces pulled back to a buffer zone in southern Lebanon in 1985. Some analysts label the fierce fighting between Amal and Hizbollah by 1988 a virtual surrogate war between Syria and Iran.[66]

60. Goodarzi, *Syria and Iran*, p. 178; Agha and Khalidi, *Syria and Iran*, p. 113.

61. Olmert, "Iranian-Syrian Relations," p. 173.

62. Goodarzi, *Syria and Iran*, pp. 4, 88, 127–28, 133, 144, 146–47, 156, 199, 201, 256–59, 264; Agha and Khalidi, *Syria and Iran*, pp. 19, 21.

63. Ehteshami and Hinnebusch, *Syria and Iran*, pp. 124–25, 131; Goodarzi, *Syria and Iran*, pp. 127–28, 133, 156, 256–57; Agha and Khalidi, *Syria and Iran*, pp. 19, 21.

64. Agha and Khalidi, *Syria and Iran*, p. 24.

65. Marschall, "Syria-Iran," p. 440. The Asad regime did not want to see Hizbollah eliminated as a fighting force. This group was extremely useful to the Syrians for achieving key goals, especially in relation to Israel. But Asad wanted Hizbollah and Iran to work for Syria's objectives and within his purview. When their goals began in the mid-1980s to run counter to his, Asad's response was quick and forceful.

66. Ehteshami and Hinnebusch, *Syria and Iran*, pp. 133–34.

Syrian leaders in these years also publicly and privately expressed deep concern about Iran's efforts to spread Islamist ideology throughout the Middle East, and Syrian diplomats began to question the wisdom of their state's support of Iran. In protest of Iran's expansionary ideological objectives in Lebanon, Syrian officials claimed early in 1987 to have stopped their country's arms shipments to Iran, which they had provided since 1980 to help Iran in the war with Iraq.[67] In 1989, Syria signed the Taif Accord, which was brokered by one of Iran's major enemies in the region, Saudi Arabia. The agreement called for Syria to withdraw its troops from Beirut and the disarming of the militias, the latter of which significantly curtailed Iran's influence in Lebanon.[68]

A number of Iranian leaders reciprocated these hostilities. Interior Minister Ali Akbar Mohtashemi warned Syrian officials in 1987 that if Syria and its Lebanese allies continued to move against Hizbollah, this militia could be unleashed against Syria; if this occurred, "there would be nothing we [Iran] could do for you [Syria]." Foreign Minister Velayati made similar threats.[69] Iranian officials even warned in 1987 that any further attacks on Hizbollah members by Syria or its allies would be considered an attack on Iran.[70] Other leaders argued that Iran should reduce ties with Syria because of the secular nature of the Syrian regime, its persecution of Islamists, and its failure to support Islamist international goals.[71]

Notice that many of these major conflicts over the future ideological order in Lebanon and the virtual dissolution of the Syrian-Iranian alliance occurred while the Iran-Iraq War was ongoing (the war did not end until 1988). Thus despite the withdrawal of American forces from Lebanon in 1984 and that of the Israeli military to a buffer in southern Lebanon in 1985, substantial balancing forces were still pushing Syria and Iran together. These outcomes support a central claim of Hypothesis 2 concerning the nature of alliances among ideological enemies: the realist balancing incentives necessary for ideological rivals to overcome the centrifugal effects created by their ideological differences must be extremely high. For Syria and Iran, the common threat created by Iraq after 1984, although very strong, was not sufficiently powerful to prevent ideological disagreements over the future of Lebanon from greatly harming the relationship. The alliance continued, but in a significantly weakened state from its heyday in the early 1980s.

67. Claude van England, "Second Thoughts: Syria, Libya Rethink Their Support of Iran," *Christian Science Monitor*, March 6, 1987.

68. Hunter, "Iran and Syria," p. 210; David W. Lesch, *The New Lion of Damascus: Bashar al-Asad and Modern Syria* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), pp. 48–49.

69. Quoted in Ehteshami and Hinnebusch, *Syria and Iran*, p. 133.

70. Goodarzi, *Syria and Iran*, p. 204.

71. Claude van England, "Iran-Libya-Syria Triangle: Marriage of Convenience," *Christian Science Monitor*, April 25, 1986.

Powerful forces for an alliance between Syria and Iran continued to exist in the 1990s. Even after Iraq's defeat in the 1991 Gulf War, it remained a significant danger to its neighbors. Iraq's military expenditures for the first three years after the Gulf War (1992 to 1994) equaled Syria's and were nearly 30 percent more than Iran's.[72] Turkey also posed an increasing danger throughout the decade to both Syria and Iran. Turkey and Iran had a number of intense crises in the 1990s, primarily due to Turkish leaders' fears that Iran was trying to spread its Islamist principles in Turkey (see chapter 4 for details). Turkey and Syria nearly went to war in the late 1990s due to the latter's continued support of the militant Kurdistan Workers' Party, or PKK (a terrorist organization dedicated to Kurdish independence).[73] Shared enmity to both Turkey and Iraq meant that the balancing incentives for Syria and Iran to remain allied remained strong throughout the 1990s. Ideological differences between the two states, however, continued to push them apart.

A critical development for the evolution of the Syrian-Iranian alliance in the 1990s was that Iranian conservatives in that decade (and beyond) maintained their intense ideological hostility toward Israel, but the Syrians did not (Iranian reformers' ideological hostility to Israel was lower, as discussed in chapter 2). According to Israel's chief negotiator with Syria in the 1990s and Middle Eastern scholar, Itamar Rabinovich, Syria's key decision makers early in this decade underwent a "profound change:" an explicit switch "in Syria's view of the conflict with Israel from an 'existential' one to a 'territorial' one and a de facto separation of the Israeli-Syrian dispute from the Palestinian issue." Asad in 1993 stated "for the first time that . . . he was willing to offer a full contractual peace," i.e., the formal signing of a peace treaty as an outcome of successful negotiations over the Golan Heights that promised the normalization of relations.[74] These positions were a clear rejection of anti-Zionist prescriptions.

72. Correlates of War Project, National Material Capabilities (v4.0), available at http://www.correlatesofwar.org/. Accessed November 15, 2011.

73. For details, see Robert Olson, *Turkey's Relations with Iran, Syria, Israel and Russia, 1991–2000* (Costa Mesa, CA: Mazda Publishers, 2001), ch. 4.

74. Rabinovich, *The View From Damascus,* pp. 252, 292; see also pp. 299, 301. A number of developments in the late 1980s and early 1990s—chiefly the termination of major Soviet military aid in 1987, as well as the end of the Cold War and a weak Syrian economy—contributed to this "profound change" by pushing Asad to adopt less grandiose objectives than anti-Zionism required. As the scholars Agha and Khalidi express this point, by the early 1990s Asad had made "a significant move away from radical pan-Arabism . . . toward a more localized 'Syrianism'" (Agha and Khalidi, *Syria and Iran*, p. 42; see also Robert G. Rabil, *Syria, the United States, and the War on Terror in the Middle East* [Westport, CT: Praeger, 2006], pp. 94–95, 105–06). Because pan-Arabist and anti-Zionist beliefs were closely related, the diminishment in importance of pan-Arabism to Syrian leaders also weakened their commitment to anti-Zionism.

The result of these changes by the Syrians was a significant increase in the ideological differences dividing Syria and Iran, because the key ideological bond—anti-Zionism—that had linked them in the past was gone. Iranian leaders were clear that Syria's abandonment of anti-Zionist ideology was a critical difference between the two states that created major frictions. As one Iranian official explained in a 1993 statement: "Iran rejects any type of compromise with the Zionist regime and believes that a solution to the Middle East problem is contingent on cleansing the area of the usurping and illegitimate [Israeli] regime, while Syria has accepted the implementation of UN resolutions that divide Palestine between the Zionist regime and the Palestinians."[75] Iranian officials and newspapers with close ties to the government frequently made fierce attacks against the Syrian government for the latter's newfound willingness to engage in peace talks with Israel. As explained above, the Iranians' hostility to Israel was almost entirely due to the effects of ideologies. Israel and Iran had no major conflicts of material interests, and the two states were friendly before the Iranian Revolution. Iran's condemnations of Syria's peace negotiations with Israel and consequent assertions that Syria was becoming a rival of Iran were thus also a product of ideological differences. One such denunciation claimed that "after figuring for years in progressive and anti-Zionist ranks, Syria is now taking its place in the anti-Iranian camp as it submits to US and Zionist dictates."[76] Another asserted that Syria had "stabbed [Iran] in the back" after being "lured into a U.S.-Zionist trap."[77] In July 1995, Foreign Minister Velayati declared that "the more a country gets close to the usurper regime [Israel], the more it will distance itself from us."[78] In 1996, a source at Iran's foreign ministry claimed that a Syrian-Israeli peace treaty would be the "the end for the strategic Tehran-Damascus relations."[79]

Although fears of abandonment like the ones highlighted in the preceding quotations are not uncommon among allies, the large ideological distance dividing Iranian and Syrian leaders were central to these concerns in this case. Without a shared ideological hostility toward Israel, the common interests that pushed Iran and Syria together were

75. Quoted in Ehteshami and Hinnebusch, *Syria and Iran*, p. 191; also Hunter, "Iran and Syria," p. 213.

76. Quoted in David Hirst, "Syria's Talks with Israel Place Alliance with Iran under Strain," *Manchester Guardian Weekly*, January 7, 1996.

77. Quoted in "Syria Vows to Maintain 'Brotherly' Ties with Iran," Agence France Presse, January 1, 1996.

78. Quoted in Ehteshami and Hinnebusch, *Syria and Iran*, p. 193.

79. Quoted in "Iran Reveals Difference with Syria," Xinhua News Agency, January 3, 1996.

becoming increasingly weak. Syria (according to Israeli officials) acted contrary to Iranian preferences and in late 1995 or early 1996 suspended armament shipments from Iran to Hizbollah in Lebanon. In response to this decision, the Iranians went behind their ally's back when Iran's deputy foreign minister secretly visited Damascus to meet with prominent extremist groups to provide clandestine aid to Hizbollah. Syrian-Iranian diplomatic relations were also deteriorating at this time. Iranian officials cancelled trips to Syria to indicate their disapproval with the trajectory of the relationship. Syrian leaders both refused to meet with their Iranian counterparts to discuss the growing tensions between the two states, and reduced the number of diplomatic missions sent to Iran compared to previous levels. Syria also earned Iran's ire when the former in December 1995 joined with other Arab countries in supporting the United Arab Emirates in a territorial dispute with Iran.[80]

Events in 1996, however, resuscitated the Syrian-Iranian alliance. Early in that year, Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres suspended negotiations with Syria after Hamas perpetrated a series of bombings in Israel.[81] In May of this year, the Likud party won the parliamentary elections, which meant that the hard-liner Benjamin Netanyahu would become Israel's next prime minister. Netanyahu was adamant that the Golan Heights not be returned to Syria. Instead of a "land for peace" deal with Syria, the new prime minister insisted that the Asad regime had to establish normal relations with Israel without preconditions. Until such a time, Netanyahu called for the containment of Syria along with Iraq and Iran.[82]

These developments significantly increased the balancing and offensive motives for Syria to ally with Iran. The effects of these changes were immediate. One month after Israel suspended peace talks with Syria in January 1996, the Syrian and Iranian vice presidents met to "begin repairing their strained relations" resulting from Syria's negotiations with Israel.[83] Within

80. On the preceding points, see "Iran Resumes Arms Shipments to Hezbollah," *The Iran Brief,* May 6, 1996; Douglas Davis, "Syria, Lebanon Upset at Secret Iranian Aid to Hizbullah," *Jerusalem Post,* June 14, 1996; "Behind the Iranian Press Campaign against Syria," *Mideast Mirror,* January 9, 1996; "Could Iran's Quarrel with Syria Prompt It to Embrace Iraq?," *Mideast Mirror,* January 4, 1996.

81. Ehteshami and Hinnebusch, *Syria and Iran*, p. 172.

82. Rabil, *Syria, the United States, and the War on Terror in the Middle East*, pp. 108–09.

83. Thanaa Imam, "Syria, Iran Plan Talks for Better Ties," United Press International, February 21, 1996.

the first six months after Netanyahu's election as prime minister, Syrian and Iranian leaders pledged to deepen their strategic and economic relations. As part of these efforts, Syria renewed its cooperation with Iran in aiding Hizbollah in Lebanon, including transporting large amounts of weapons to this group.[84] The alliance would become even tighter in the 2000s, for reasons I discuss at length in the next section.[85]

The primary purpose of the preceding analysis was to show the contradictory nature of Syrian-Iranian relations from 1984 to 1996, and thus how difficult it is for ideological enemies to maintain tight cooperation. Very powerful forces pushed Syria and Iran into alliance in the early 1980s. When these forces weakened—but were by no means eliminated—the effects of ideological differences created massive conflicts of interest that at times virtually ended cooperation. To understand alliances among ideological enemies, the centrifugal effects created by ideological differences must be taken into account, even when realist balancing incentives for alignment are strong. Major ideological differences dividing leaders require much stronger incentives to remain in close and stable alignment than would be necessary in different ideological circumstances.

## THE EFFECTS OF IDEOLOGICAL MULTIPOLARITY AND HARD- AND SOFT-LINE POLICIES ON SYRIAN, IRANIAN, AND AMERICAN RELATIONS

American leaders have possessed a long-standing interest in the dissolution of the Syrian-Iranian alliance. The end of this coalition would advance a number of key U.S. objectives in the Middle East, including reducing the collective power of two of America's main competitors in the region and minimizing the power of radical groups such as Hamas, Islamic Jihad, and Hizbollah. Much of the money and weaponry that Iran provides these groups flows through Syria. James A. Baker, secretary of state for President George H. W. Bush, stated in 1991 that Syrian participation in the Middle

84. "Syria, Iran Pledge to Improve Relations," Agence France Presse, August 18, 1996; "Israeli Source: Syria Expanding Links with Iran to Aid Hezbollah in Lebanon," BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, December 10, 1996.

85. Major tensions between Syria and Iran resurfaced in 1999 and 2000, for reasons identical to those discussed above, when peace talks between Israel and Syria restarted. See Kianouche Dorranie, "Iran Condemns Syria, Arafat and Calls to Erase Israel from 'Map of World,'" Agence France Presse, December 31, 1999; "Conservative Iran Newspaper Warns Syria against Negotiations with Israel," Agence France Presse, January 18, 2000; "EU Envoy Tells Israel Syria Fears Iran May Sabotage Peace Process," BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, December 21, 1999.

Eastern peace process, which required Syria breaking from Iran's preferences, was "vital" for success.[86] President Bill Clinton, according to one of his closest Middle Eastern advisors, believed that Syria, free of its alliance with Iran, was "the key to a comprehensive [regional peace] settlement.[87] President George W. Bush described the dangers of the Syrian-Iranian alliance—and thus the benefits to U.S. interests of weakening it—as follows: "For many years, Syria has been a primary sponsor of Hezbollah and it has helped provide Hezbollah with shipments of Iranian-made weapons. Iran's regime has also repeatedly defied the international community with its ambition for nuclear weapons and aid to terrorist groups. Their [Syria's and Iran's] actions threaten the entire Middle East and stand in the way of . . . bringing lasting peace to this troubled region."[88]

If the argument developed in chapter 1 is correct, ideological soft-line policies by the United States should have been more effective than hard-line actions in weakening the Syrian-Iranian alliance. Recall that Hypothesis 3B asserts that one of the conditions when soft-line policies are better suited to advance states' interests toward ideological enemies is when the system is one of ideological multipolarity. In these situations, accommodating policies toward the lesser of two threats provide the best chance of using other states' ideological differences to inhibit sustained cooperation between them. When ideological group A confronts ideological groups B and C, the barriers to alignment between the latter are likely to be considerable. Only very powerful forces for alliance are likely to overcome these impediments. A major disadvantage of consistent hard-line actions by ideological group A is that these policies will tend to create precisely these incentives. Hostile policies by ideological group A, in other words, will tend to push ideological groups B and C together against A when B and C would likely otherwise be antagonistic toward one another. At the same time, A's hostilities will greatly inhibit, if not preclude, cooperation between A and one of the other two groups against the remaining one. Group A's interests in these instances will thus be doubly harmed.

Ideological soft-line policies reverse these tendencies. More accommodating actions by ideological group A toward the lesser of two threats will lower the incentives for B and C to ally, thereby increasing the likelihood that the latter's ideological differences will keep them separated. Such policies may even entice B or C to cooperate with A against the remaining third.

86. James A. Baker, "Middle East Peace Conference," speech delivered November 1, 1991, *U.S. Department of State Dispatch*, Vol. 2, No. 44 (November 4, 1991).

87. Martin Indyk, *Innocent Abroad: An Intimate Account of American Peace Diplomacy in the Middle East* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2009), p. 99; also pp. 18–21, 104.

88. Quoted in Helene Cooper and David E. Sanger, "U.S. Plan Seeks to Wedge Syria Away from Iran," *New York Times*, July 23, 2006.

To be clear, when I assert that soft-line policies can advance states' interests toward ideological rivals in ideologically multipolar systems, I am not claiming that ideologies are not important to international relations. Such an assertion would be consistent with realist beliefs. Instead, I am arguing for an understanding of the *full range of ways in which ideologies shape outcomes*, including the effects of not only ideological distances but ideological polarity as well. Systems with three or more prominent ideological groups have different dynamics than ones with only two such parties, and leaders must comprehend these differences in order to best advance their state's interests.

I test the preceding predictions with regards to American Middle Eastern policies and the Syrian-Iranian alliance by analyzing U.S. policies toward Syria in the 1990s and 2000s. Some American policymakers adhered to hard-line policies toward Syria as a means of weakening this state's alliance with Iran, others adopted accommodating actions to achieve this end. This variation allows for tests of Hypothesis 3B.

Officials in the George H. W. Bush and Clinton administrations consistently pursued ideological soft-line policies toward Syria as a means of inducing more cooperative behavior from this state, including distancing from Iran. Perhaps most importantly, these policymakers reciprocated and cultivated the Syrians' willingness in the 1990s to engage in peace talks with Israel.[89] In June 1991, Bush sent Asad a letter inviting him to the Madrid peace conference that fall.[90] In lead-up discussions to this conference, Bush affirmed to Asad that the United States did not recognize Israel's annexation of the Golan Heights.[91] In the same year, the Bush White House liberalized restrictions of U.S. goods that could be exported to Syria in order to provide a boost to its economy.[92] Many Bush administration officials also viewed Syrian power in Lebanon to be both potentially a source of stability and a superior alternative to increased Iranian influence.[93] In 1991, Bush reportedly gave Asad a green light to consolidate Syria's position in Lebanon, which led to the signing of the "Lebanon-Syria Treaty of Brotherhood, Cooperation, and Coordination" on May 20, 1991.[94] The treaty established Syrian control of Lebanese foreign, economic, and defense policies under the cover of "joint" decision making between representatives of the two countries.

89. As Martin Indyk, Clinton's Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs, put it: "An Israeli-Syrian peace would drive a wedge between Syria and Iran" (Indyk, *Innocent Abroad*, p. 43; also p. 237).

90. Agha and Khalidi, *Syria and Iran*, p. 60.

91. Ehteshami and Hinnebusch, *Syria and Iran*, p. 159.

92. Rabil, *Syria, the United States, and the War on Terror in the Middle East*, p. 96.

93. International Crisis Group, *Syria Under Bashar (I): Foreign Policy Challenges* (Amman/Brussels, February 11, 2004), p. 15; Lesch, *The New Lion of Damascus*, pp. 49, 111.

94. Lesch, *The New Lion of Damascus*, p. 111.

The Clinton administration continued these soft-line actions. Indeed, Clinton, according to Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs Martin Indyk, believed that "Syria was the key to a comprehensive [regional peace] settlement [and as a result] . . . he wanted to built a positive bilateral relationship" with it.[95] Clinton officials, like their predecessors, publicly emphasized the benefits that Syria could provide to American interests, including moderating Hizbollah and Iranian influence in Lebanon.[96] Between 1993 and 1997, Clinton sent Secretary of State Warren Christopher to Damascus more than twenty times to try to facilitate a Syrian peace agreement with Israel.[97] Clinton himself had two summits with Asad in these years primarily for the same objective.

By adopting accommodating policies toward Syria, and especially encouraging Syrian-Israeli peace talks, the Bush Sr. and Clinton administrations both reduced the intensity of the forces that were pushing Syria and Iran together (though these forces were by no means eliminated, since powerful shared threats from Turkey and Iraq remained), and cultivated the growing ideological divide between Syria and Iran that resulted from Syria's abandonment of anti-Zionism. The large and increasing ideological differences separating Syrian and Iranian leaders in the 1990s meant that the incentives for alliance needed to be extremely strong in order to continue to overcome ideologies' centrifugal effects. The Bush and Clinton administrations' accommodating policies toward Syria helped the forces for alignment drop below this threshold. The result was the enhanced importance of ideological differences to Syrian-Iranian relations in the 1990s, and thus the major increase in frictions that I described above. As the rift between Syria and Iran grew, Iran's ability to undermine U.S. interests in Lebanon, Israel, and the Palestinian territories diminished.[98] Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs Indyk expressed the intention to adopt wedge strategies toward an alliance comprised of ideological rivals as follows: "Hafez al-Asad headed a secularist Baathist regime that had little in common with the clergy in [Iran] . . . It was part of our calculation that if we could succeed in negotiating a Syrian-Israeli peace, we could break Damascus's alliance with Tehran."[99] To this thinking, reducing somewhat the balancing forces pushing Syria and Iran together would allow the two states' ideological differences to become more salient to decision

95. Indyk, *Innocent Abroad*, p. 99; also pp. 18–21, 104.

96. Rabil, *Syria, the United States, and the War on Terror in the Middle East*, pp. 100–01; International Crisis Group, *Syria Under Bashar (I)*, p. 15.

97. Goodarzi, *Syria and Iran*, p. 290.

98. Indyk *Innocent Abroad*, p. 171.

99. Indyk, *Innocent Abroad*, pp. 171–72.

making, eventually weakening if not ending their alignment, to the benefit of U.S. interests.

The ideological dynamics that significantly weakened the Syrian-Iranian alliance in the 1980s and 1990s continued to exist in the twenty-first century. Syrian leaders remained highly concerned about the spread of Islamist ideology, including by Iran, throughout the Middle East in general and in Syria in particular. In a 2010 interview, President Bashar al-Asad stated that "the biggest challenge [for Syria] is how can we keep our society as secular as it is today . . . [T]he challenge is the [Islamic] extremism in this region."[100] In the years following a September 2008 Islamist terrorist attack in Damascus that killed seventeen people, the government intensified its efforts, according to Syrian officials, "to reassert Syria's traditional secularism in the face of rising threats from radical groups in the region."[101] Consistent with these statements, Syrian leaders on a number of occasions in the 2000s told Western interlocutors that the Syrian-Iranian alliance was not a permanent fact, and that only American and Israeli hard-line policies kept Syria tied as closely as it was to Iran and other Islamist groups. Some Syrian officials, including President Asad, even went so far as to state that they preferred closer relations with the United States than Iran.[102]

Unlike his predecessors, President George W. Bush was a forceful advocate of hard-line policies toward Syria. The result was that this administration failed to take advantage of the opportunities for the successful adoption of wedge strategies that were created by Syrian-Iranian ideological differences in a condition of ideological multipolarity. The root cause of this failure is laced with irony. For an administration for which ideology was at the heart of many international decisions, Bush administration officials failed to acknowledge how ideological differences were likely to shape Syrian-Iranian relations to the benefit of U.S. interests. These policymakers tended to separate regimes into the ideological categories of liberal and illiberal, thereby missing or downplaying important ideological differences among various illiberal groups that could have been used to divide threats to the United

100. Bashar al-Asad Interview on Charlie Rose, May 28th, 2010, available at: http://www.joshualandis.com/blog/?p=6592. Accessed November 15, 2011.

101. Kareem Fahim, "Syria's Solidarity with Islamists Ends at Home," *New York Times*, September 3, 2010.

102. For example, after an April 2008 meeting between Asad and former U.S. President Jimmy Carter, the latter relayed Asad's views that Syria's alliance with Iran "is an alternative to ties with the United States and the West rather than Mr. Assad's first choice." Carter stated that he "expected that Mr. Assad would be willing to separate from that alliance because he wants full peace with Israel." Ethan Bronner, "After Meeting Leaders, Carter Says Hamas and Syria Are Open to Peace with Israel," *New York Times*, April 22, 2008. See also: Michael B. Oren, "What if Israel and Syria Find Common Ground?" *New York Times*, January 24, 2007; Tovah Lazaroff, "Syria Prefers Alliance with Israel over Iran, Liel Says," *Jerusalem Post*, January 21, 2007.

States. As Bush explained in his memoirs, his administration viewed "the Middle East [as] the center of a global ideological struggle" between two main groups. "On one side were decent people who wanted to live in dignity and peace. On the other were extremists who sought to impose their radical views through violence and intimidation."[103] Syria and Iran were clearly on the same side in this ideological battle between liberalism and illiberalism.

Bush at times did recognize some differences between the secular authoritarian Syrian regime and Islamist Iran. In a major policy speech in 2003, for example, the president described Syria as a "dictatorship" and Iran governed by "an ideology of theocratic terror." To Bush, though, this was a distinction without a difference, since "behind [Iranian leaders'] language of religion is the ambition for absolute political power," which made Iran very similar ideologically to Syria.[104]

Bush officials' tendency to lump all illiberals into the same ideological category is consistent with the administration's "either with us or against us" philosophy, to which the president and others in his administration frequently referred.[105] One senior U.S. official described Syria, just like Iran, as "on the wrong side in the war on terror."[106] Others labeled Syria as a member of the "junior varsity axis of evil," and therefore on the same side as Iran.[107] Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld stated that he was not surprised that illiberal Syria and Iran opposed the war in Iraq because "having a free and sovereign and democratic Iraq on their borders probably is not terribly encouraging to their type of government" (notice the lumping of Syria and Iran into a single regime type).[108]

Because leaders in the Bush administration placed Syria and Iran into the same ideological category, they found it very difficult to engage Syria. Instead of adopting more accommodating policies designed to target and enhance the major ideological differences separating Syrian and Iranian politicians, the Bush administration adopted the opposite approach, believing that aggressive actions toward Syria would be the best means of inducing

103. Bush, George W. Bush, *Decision Points* (New York: Crown Publishers, 2010), p. 232; also p. 414.

104. "President Bush Discusses Freedom in Iraq and Middle East," November 6, 2003, http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2003/11/20031106-2.html. Accessed November 15, 2011.

105. See, for example, George W. Bush, "Address to Congress," September 20, 2001; George W. Bush "Rose Garden Speech on Israel-Palestine Two-State Solution," June 24, 2002.

106. Quoted in Glenn Kessler and Mike Allen, "Syria Is 'on the Wrong Side' in War on Terror, Officials Say," *Washington Post*, October 6, 2003.

107. For this and similar quotations, see Lesch, *The New Lion of Damascus*, p. 254, note 30.

108. Quoted in Robert Burns, "Rumsfeld Warns Iran, Syria on Insurgents," Associated Press Online, February 10, 2006.

Syria to change its foreign policies, including ending its alliance with Iran. In December 2003 the president signed the Syria Accountability and Lebanese Sovereignty Restoration Act (SALSRA). The act banned all American exports to Syria (except for food and medicine), prohibited Syrian air carriers from landing in or flying over the United States, prohibited American businesses from investing or operating in Syria, reduced diplomatic contacts, and restricted the movements of Syrian diplomats in America (although the president in 2004 only activated the first two restrictions on this list). Washington also both stopped Syria's bid for membership in the World Trade Organization, and pressured the European Union to postpone Syria's association agreement with this institution.[109] When Israeli policymakers indicated a willingness to test Syria's commitment to the peace process, they were strongly discouraged from doing so by Bush administration officials.[110]

Intertwined with these aggressive policies were statements by Bush administration officials stating that the authoritarian regime in Syria had to go before it could expect meaningful cooperation with the United States. Former U.S. ambassador to Syria Theodore Kattouf claims that the Bush administration "did not hesitate to let people know, through leaks and the like, that perhaps Syria was next" to be attacked after Iraq for the purposes of regime change.[111]

The Bush administration's hard-line actions toward Syria failed to weaken the Syrian-Iranian alliance. Rather than distancing from Iran, Syrian leaders responded to the Bush administration's coercive policies by significantly increasing their strategic cooperation with it. In early 2005, Syrian and Iranian leaders signed a mutual defense pact that was clearly directed at the United States.[112] The result was that by 2006, "Damascus and Tehran [were] more closely tied to one another than at any time since the late 1980s."[113] Instead of cultivating the effects of ideological differences to help drive a wedge between Syria and Iran, the Bush administration's policies overwhelmed the ideological hostilities that existed between these states.

109. Mir H. Sadat and Daniel B. Jones, "U.S. Foreign Policy Toward Syria: Balancing Ideology and National Interests," *Middle East Policy*, Vol. 16, No. 2 (Summer 2009), pp. 96–100.

110. Helene Cooper, "Advice from the White House Is Not Always Followed," *New York Times*, May 22, 2008.

111. Quoted in Sadat and Jones, "U.S. Foreign Policy Toward Syria," p. 97.

112. Ewen MacAskill, "Iran and Syria Close Ranks against U.S.," *Manchester Guardian Weekly*, February 25–March 3, 2005.

113. Fred H. Lawson, "Syria's Relations with Iran: Managing the Dilemmas of an Alliance," *The Middle East Journal*, Vol. 61, No. 1 (Winter 2007), p. 42.

The key problem with the Bush administration's policies was not that these officials viewed the illiberalism of the Syrian and Iranian regimes as a source of hostilities with America. They were correct in this assessment. The problem was instead that U.S. leaders failed to appreciate how major ideological differences created frictions not only with America, but between Syria and Iran. Bush administration leaders, in other words, tended to base their foreign policies toward Syria and Iran on the effects of ideological distances alone, and not those of ideological multipolarity. By failing to make full use of ideologies' international effects, these officials missed an opportunity to achieve a goal that they stated was of major importance to U.S. interests.

The effects of ideological multipolarity on Syrian leaders' foreign policies went beyond their relationship with Iran. The incentives created by this variable pushed the Syrians at times to engage in seemingly contradictory, almost schizophrenic, foreign policies. Most importantly, sometimes the Syrians actively cooperated with the United States against Islamist terrorist groups, sometimes they did the reverse. Understanding the dynamics of ideologically multipolar systems as well as the conditions under which ideological enemies are likely to align are central to making sense of these choices.

In order for the secular-authoritarian Syrian regime to engage in significant security cooperation with liberal America, Hypothesis 2 asserts that at least one of the four main incentives for alignment that I discussed in chapter 1 had to have been very powerful. This condition was met for Syrian leaders in the early 2000s, when they were increasingly concerned about the domestic threat posed by Islamists. This worry was due to a number of developments, including actions taken by the Syrian government. In the 1990s, Syrian policymakers made a number of concessions to religious practices and even Islamist groups, including releasing most imprisoned members of the Muslim Brotherhood; allowing exiled Brotherhood members to return to Syria; and building hundreds of mosques and religious schools, many of which taught the fundamentalist Wahhabi strain of Islam that originates from Saudi Arabia.[114] These policies may seem puzzling, but secular authoritarian governments in the Islamic world have a number of reasons for ensuring that fundamentalist groups maintain a certain level of power in their state. As long as a credible Islamist domestic threat exists, authoritarian regimes can more easily justify to their own people continued repression as a necessity against a perceived

114. Neil MacFarquhar, "Syria, Long Ruthlessly Secular, Sees Fervent Islamic Resurgence," *The New York Times*, October 24, 2003; Eyal Zisser, "Syria, the Ba'th Regime, and the Islamic Movement: Stepping on a New Path?" *Muslim World*, Vol. 95, No. 1 (January 2005), pp. 48–52.

worse domestic threat.[115] Authoritarians are also more likely to receive support from foreign (especially Western) powers if their demise most likely means replacement by Islamist parties, which most Western leaders view as a greater evil.[116] By making concessions to Islamists, Syrian leaders also likely hoped both to increase their legitimacy among religious groups at home and abroad and to enhance their ability to threaten Israel.

Although the Syrian government had a hand in bolstering Islamist groups in the 1990s, by early in the new century Syrian decision makers were more worried about the threat posed by fundamentalists than at any time since the 1982 massacre of the Muslim Brotherhood in Hama.[117] Several factors worked together to spur these fears. The first was due to "closer ties between the [Syrian Muslim Brotherhood] and the radical Islamic movements in the Arab world," including Hizbollah; Hamas; Islamic Jihad; Sunni groups in Lebanon, Tunisia, Algeria and Jordan; and al Qaeda.[118] While Syrian leaders had supported many of these groups in their state's conflict with Israel, increased coordination between these parties and the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood was a growing cause for concern. Al Qaeda leaders, for example, openly declared their enmity toward the secular Syrian regime as well as their desire to overthrow it. In 2000, one leading al Qaeda tactician described Alawi Shias (who have dominated the Syrian government) as "heretics." He concluded that "it is not permissible for Muslims to stay under [Alawi] rule . . . [The Alawis] must be pursued and killed to cleanse them from Greater Syria and the face of the earth."[119] Documents captured by U.S. forces in Iraq revealed that al Qaeda leaders believed that the likelihood of revolution in Syria in the 2000s was high, and that coordination with the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood could achieve this goal.[120]

A second reason why Syrian leaders likely were increasingly worried about the domestic threat posed by Islamists is that the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks perpetrated by al Qaeda and America's foreign policy responses to these events (chiefly the wars in Afghanistan and especially Iraq)

115. As one Syrian intellectual expressed this point: "The regime . . . continues to put the question in a very drastic way, 'It's either us or a Taliban government'" (quoted in MacFarquhar, "Syria, Long Ruthlessly Secular, Sees Fervent Islamic Resurgence").

116. For quotations to this effect by leaders in Muslim-majority countries, see Fareed Zakaria, *The Future of Freedom: Illiberal Democracy at Home and Abroad* (New York: WW Norton, 2003), pp. 119–20.

117. Lesch, *The New Lion of Damascus*, pp. 208–09; Eyal Zisser, *Commanding Syria: Bashar al-Asad and the First Years in Power* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2007), pp. 93–94; International Crisis Group, *Syria Under Bashar (II): Domestic Policy Challenges* (Amman/Brussels, February 11, 2004), pp. 15–16.

118. Zisser, "Syria, the Ba'th Regime, and the Islamic Movement," pp. 57–58.

119. Quoted in Michael Rubin, "Syria's Path to Islamist Terror," *Middle East Quarterly*, Vol. 17, No. 1 (Winter 2010), p. 32.

120. Rubin, "Syria's Path to Islamist Terror," p. 37. See also Talhamy, "The Syrian Muslim Brothers and the Syrian-Iranian Relationship," pp. 573–77.

emboldened and enflamed Muslim passions around the world. Syria was unlikely to be an exception to this trend.

Finally, the Islamization of daily life in Syria by the early 2000s had increased significantly from previous years. The growth of mosque attendance in Syria, increased numbers of women wearing the veil, and more people advocating jihad and resistance against Western power and culture, including secular politics, demonstrate, in the words of a *New York Times* reporter, Syria's "fervent Islamic resurgence" soon after the turn of the century.[121] Although the Islamization of personal life is distinct from political Islamism, Syrian leaders had reason to believe the former could lead to the latter, especially in the context of 9/11 and its aftermath.

Given these developments, it is not surprising that Syrian leaders were becoming more worried about the domestic vulnerability of their regime. Syrian spokesmen in the early 2000s increased their warnings about the Islamist domestic threat,[122] and they expanded their verbal assaults on the Muslim Brotherhood. As senior Syrian officials explained in June 2001: "Anyone who is familiar with the organizational and ideological structure of [the Muslim Brotherhood] will not be deluded [about the dangers this group poses] . . . This is a terrorist organization . . . The Muslim Brotherhood believes that a political and organizational vacuum exists in Syria and that the opportunity has been created to return and fill that vacuum. . . ."[123] As an indication of Syrian leaders' heightened concern of the Islamist threat, Syrian elites closed ranks against this danger in support of the existing regime. According to the scholar Eyal Zisser (writing in 2005): "The [Syrian] regime still appears to enjoy the support of most of the pillars of Syrian society: army officers, economic elites, and the small middle class. Those elements understand better than any foreign observer that the alternative to the current regime is not necessarily a liberal democracy as envisaged by [the United States], but rather Islamist fundamentalism of the sort that would make the Ba'ath look, by contrast, positively libertarian."[124]

The perceived internal threat posed by Islamists led Syrian leaders to help the United States "in the battle against al-Qaida and related violent

121. MacFarquhar, "Syria, Long Ruthlessly Secular, Sees Fervent Islamic Resurgence." See also Katherine Zoepf, "Women Lead an Islamic Revival in Syria, Testing Its Secularism," *New York Times*, August 29, 2006; International Crisis Group, *Syria Under Bashar (II)*, p. 15; Lesch, *The New Lion of Damascus*, pp. 208–09; Donna Abu-Nasr, "Shootings Raise Extremism Fears in Syria," Associated Press Online, April 28, 2004.

122. Zisser, "Syria, the Ba'th Regime, and the Islamic Movement," p. 61.

123. Quoted in Zisser, "Syria, the Ba'th Regime, and the Islamic Movement," p. 57. For a similar quotation, see ibid., p. 62.

124. Eyal Zisser, "Bashar Al-Assad: In or Out of the New World Order?" *Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 28, No. 3 (Summer 2005), p. 119.

Islamic groups that Damascus' secular government also sees as threats."[125] Syrian leaders, in other words, were following the "domestic" logic for alignment that frequently exists in ideologically multipolar systems. The Syrians increased cooperation with one ideological enemy abroad in order to better defeat a more pressing ideological threat at home. Syrian cooperation with the United States did not rise to the level of an alliance, but the security aid was important.[126]

After the September 11 terrorist attacks, Syria used its extensive intelligence network that monitored Islamist groups' activities to help the United States arrest dozens of Islamic terrorists around the world. This information even apparently aided America in thwarting attacks on U.S. targets that saved many lives. Syria also imprisoned and tortured terrorist suspects sent to this state under America's controversial rendition program.[127] One U.S. official in January 2003 described relations with Syria as involving "extremely productive cooperation."[128] CIA sources in the same year acknowledged that the "quality and quantity of information [from Syria on fundamentalist groups] exceeded the agency's expectations."[129] President Bush even called President Bashar to thank him for his help against Islamists.[130] As the Syrian Ambassador to the United States explained in April 2004 after an Islamist terrorist attack in Damascus, "We've been doing our best against al Qaeda" and cooperating with the United States because "we share the same enemy."[131]

Even at the height of Syrian leaders' cooperation with the United States against Islamists, however, these politicians continued to have major conflicts of interest with America, and the Bush administration's hard-line policies amplified these differences. In ideologically multipolar worlds, even

125. Warren P. Strobel, "For U.S., Relations with Syria a Delicate Matter; Country Fights Terror with One Hand, Aids with Other," Knight Ridder News Service, June 23, 2002.

126. Fears that the United States would attack Syria after invading Iraq also increased in some ways the incentives for Syrian leaders to adopt accommodating policies toward America. Syria aided the United States against Islamists, however, well before the deployment of American troops to Iraq. Moreover, American threats against Syria usually resulted in less, not more, cooperation with the United States, as I detail throughout this chapter.

127. Howard Schneider, "Syria Evolves as Anti-Terror Ally," *Washington* Post, July 25, 2002; Jonathon Gatehouse, "Syria's Next Trick: A Bargain for Power," *Maclean's*, August 14–21, 2006, Vol. 119, Issue 32/33; Zisser, "Bashar Al-Assad."

128. Quoted in Clifford Krauss, "U.S. Welcomes Thaw in Relations with 'Pragmatic' Syria," *The New York Times*, January 2, 2003. See also Lesch, *The New Lion of Damascus*, pp. 102, 161.

129. Quoted in Stephen Zunes, "U.S. Policy Towards Syria and the Triumph of Neoconservatism," *Middle East Policy*, Vol. 11, No. 1 (Spring 2004), p. 54.

130. Eyal Zisser, "Syria and the United States: Bad Habits Die Hard," *Middle East Quarterly* (Summer 2003), pp. 29–37.

131. Quoted in Sachs, "Damascus Hit by a Bombing and a Gunfight," *New York Times*, April 28, 2004. After 2004, there was a significant rise in clashes between Syrian security forces and radical Islamist factions. See ibid; Eyal Zisser, "Bashar al-Asad's Gamble," *Middle East Quarterly* (Fall 2006), pp. 61–66; Rubin, "Syria's Path to Islamist Terror," pp. 31–32.

when two ideological groups are cooperating against a shared ideological enemy, ideological hostilities between the former continue to exist.

As a consequence of these considerations, Bashar in 2003 tried to thwart both of his ideological enemies. While cooperating with the United States against Islamists in the ways listed above, the Syrian government also aided the insurgency in Iraq after America's invasion of this state in 2003. Both before and after the war began, Asad allowed and encouraged Islamists to cross from Syria into Iraq to fuel the insurgency.[132] These policies were in part designed to pressure the Americans to adopt more accommodating policies toward Syria, and partly a product of ideological differences dividing the two countries. While the Syrians did not want Islamists to become too powerful, they also did not want to see the spread of liberalism in the region. A democratic Iraq allied to the United States would not only have increased Syria's strategic vulnerability but could have increased the revolutionary threat in Syria from the empowerment of liberal parties in the region.[133]

The Syrians supported neither the United States nor Islamists out of ideological conviction. In ideologically multipolar systems, leaders' best bet to protect their security is often to try to walk a double tightrope, simultaneously supporting and opposing both of their ideological enemies so that neither becomes strong enough to overthrow their regime. Understanding why the Syrians were engaging in this "double game" is critical for policy prescription and advancing American interests. If the Syrians were indeed reacting to the incentives created by ideological multipolarity, then hard-line policies by the Americans to try to compel the Syrians to change their behavior in ways more unambiguously supportive of the United States were likely to backfire. Again, hard-line actions in ideologically multipolar systems tend to create powerful incentives that counteract the forces that tend to keep other ideological enemies apart.

The evidence once again supports this prediction. In the fall of 2004, the United States introduced a UN Security Council Resolution that demanded that Syria pull its armed forces out of Lebanon and refrain from interfering in this state's domestic politics. This action—which came on top of both numerous statements by high-ranking American officials calling for regime change in Syria as well as economic sanctions against

132. MacFarquhar, "Syria, Long Ruthlessly Secular, Sees Fervent Islamic Resurgence"; Rubin, "Syria's Path to Islamist Terror," pp. 32–34.

133. Syrian politicians were clearly shocked at how quickly the Saddam Hussein government collapsed. This development increased their fears about the vulnerability of their own regime. The fact that some Syrian liberals increased their calls for reform after the fall of Baghdad only exacerbated these worries. See International Crisis Group, *Syria Under Bashar (II)*, pp. 9–10; Lesch, *The New Lion of Damascus*, pp. 116–83.

this state—was apparently the final straw that convinced Syrian leaders that the Bush administration was unalterably hostile to their regime.

In response to these changes, Syrian policymakers moved from playing a "double game" of aiding both of their ideological enemies to much more one-sided support of Islamists against Western interests. America's security was, as a result, more endangered. The Syrians stopped sharing with the United States intelligence that they possessed on Islamic fundamentalist groups.[134] In 2005, Syria also significantly tightened its alliance with Iran, as discussed above. Syrian leaders' support of Islamist insurgents in Iraq also spiked after 2004.[135] Because Syria's influence in Lebanon has tended to grow when the latter was in domestic turmoil, Syria supported—and perhaps spurred—Hizbollah's attacks on Israeli soldiers in 2006 that led to the Israeli attack on Lebanon, as well as Hizbollah's mass protests in 2006 and 2007 against Lebanon's government.[136]

Syrian policymakers' major increase in support for Islamist groups after 2004 occurred despite the ongoing domestic revolutionary threat posed by Syrian Islamists. By fueling both the balancing and offensive motives for alignment between Syria and Islamist groups (including Iran), American policies overwhelmed the domestic incentives that had pushed Syria to cooperate with the United States in the early 2000s.[137] Consistent hard-line actions, in other words, negated the advantages for U.S. security in the Syrian case that were created by ideological multipolarity, as ambiguous as these benefits were at times.

## CONCLUSION

Although a number of scholars have examined the origins and evolution of the Syrian-Iranian alliance, this study has added to this scholarship in key ways. First, I have shown that there are important threshold effects for alliances among ideological enemies that must be overcome before these types of coalitions are likely to be formed and sustained. Alliances among ideological

134. Douglas Jehl and Thom Shanker, "Syria Stops Cooperating with U.S. Forces and C.I.A.," *New York Times*, May 24, 2005.

135. Barry Rubin, "Iran's Nuclear and Syria's Iraq Adventures," *Middle East Review of International Affairs*, Vol. 11, No. 4 (December 2007), pp. 62–63.

136. Michael Slackman, "U.S. Ally and Foe are Trying to Avert War in Lebanon," *New York Times*, January 30, 2007; Esther Pan, "Syria, Iran, and the Mideast Conflict," Council on Foreign Relations, July 18, 2007.

137. American hard-line actions increased the offensive incentives pushing Syria to ally with Islamist groups because these policies greatly diminished the likelihood that Syria would regain the Golan Heights or increase its influence in Lebanon.

enemies are not like coalitions among other types of states. Major ideological differences create high perceptions of threat that require more powerful forces for cooperation than would be required for states that are not ideological enemies to align. In the absence of these very strong incentives, ideological enemies will either not ally or their coalitions will be highly troubled. To put it another way, the existence of potent forces for alliance suppress, but do not eliminate, the ideological sources of hostility among ideological enemies. These centrifugal effects often surface to damage a relationship. The Syrians and Iranians, for example, had major ideological conflicts over Lebanon in the 1980s and Israel in the 1990s that significantly degraded their cooperation. These conflicts occurred even though the two states continued to confront substantial balancing incentives to maintain close relations.

Second, my analysis has demonstrated, in a somewhat paradoxical finding, how ideological variables can be central to creating the powerful incentives that are necessary for ideological enemies to ally. In the case of the Syrian-Iranian alliance, threats of ideological subversion, as well as offensive goals against and common fears of shared ideological foes in an ideologically multipolar system, were critical in pushing Syrian and Iranian leaders to set aside their ideological differences and align. These outcomes support the predictions of Hypothesis 2.

This chapter's findings are important not only for theory development but for policy making as well. Specifically, this chapter's analysis, in accord with Hypothesis 3B, provides a blueprint for how states can weaken alliances among ideological enemies, especially during periods of ideological multipolarity. If these types of coalitions require particularly strong incentives to align, the weakening of these forces through soft-line tactics toward the lesser of two threats should allow the centrifugal effected created by ideological differences to become more salient to decision making. When American (and Israeli) leaders adopted accommodating policies that reduced the balancing and offensive incentives that pushed Syria and Iran together, the ideological differences dividing Syrian and Iranian elites became more salient to their relations. Syrian leaders at these times distanced themselves from Iran and moved closer to Western states. Syrian policymakers' interest in closer ties with Western countries was particularly strong in the 2000s when there was a significant domestic threat from Islamist groups in Syria. A key benefit of this strategy for weakening alliances among ideological enemies is that states can try to use ideologies to advance their interests without provoking a regime change in a target state, which is a very difficult objective to achieve.

This study is by no means the first to argue that American interests would have been better served if the George W. Bush administration, like its predecessors, had adopted a less confrontational approach toward Syria. For

example, the report issued in December 2006 by the Iraq Study Group, which was cochaired by James Baker and Lee Hamilton, argued that a U.S.-Syrian rapprochement was central to advancing America's Middle Eastern interests, including by helping to reenergize the Arab-Israeli peace process.[138] What my argument adds to this debate that the Iraq Study Group report and similar analyses do not is a systematic examination of how ideologies are likely to benefit U.S. interests by helping to weaken Syrian cooperation with Islamist groups, including Iran. The point is not simply to negotiate with Syria because of important common interests (as the Iraq Study Group report, which is realist in orientation, asserts), but to understand the central role that ideologies have in creating these shared interests and then to use this knowledge to advantage America's security.

In his first three years in office, President Barack Obama adopted a number of accommodating policies toward Syria that could take advantage of the incentives created in ideologically multipolar systems. Within months of his inauguration, Obama both sent multiple high-ranking U.S. officials to Damascus in order to try to improve relations and reaffirmed America's support of a Syrian-Israeli peace treaty that included the return of the Golan Heights.[139] Obama further tried to reduce Syria's pariah status by nominating in February 2010 an ambassador to the country (the Bush administration had broken diplomatic relations in 2005).

The Syrian government in important, though limited, ways responded favorably to the Obama administration's initiatives, although major conflicts between the two countries continued. In February 2009, Bashar claimed that he welcomed America's engagement in the Middle Eastern peace process. He stated that he wanted the United States to be the "main arbiter" in the Arab-Israeli conflict because "there is no substitute for the United States."[140] These are sentiments that Islamists, including Syria's Iranian allies, rejected, thereby likely resulting in continued tensions in this coalition.[141] In an attempt to aid the peace process, Asad in 2009 and 2010 tried to broker a reconciliation between Palestinian National Authority President Mahmoud Abbas and more radical Palestinian groups based in Damascus.[142] In July 2010, Asad

138. This document is available at http://www.bakerinstitute.org/publications/iraqstudygroup_findings.pdf. Accessed November 15, 2011.

139. Julien Barnes-Dacey, "Will Syria Play Key Role in Obama's Mideast Peace Efforts?, *Christian Science Monitor*, June 11, 2009; Glenn Kessler, "U.S. Sends Senior Officials to Syria To Revive Relations," *Washington Post*, March 4, 2009; "US Support for Syria-Israel Pact," *Financial Times* (London), May 8, 2009.

140. Ian Black, "Syrian Leader Extends Olive Branch to U.S.: Assad Calls for Return of Full Diplomatic Ties to Revive Peace Moves," *The Guardian* (London), February 18, 2009.

141. Robert F. Worth, "Car Bomb Kills 17 in Syria," *New York Times*, September 28, 2008.

142. "Columnist Says USA Has Problem with Iran Not Syria," BBC Monitoring Middle East, May 7, 2010.

publicly lamented the growing rift between U.S. allies Turkey and Israel because it decreased Turkey's ability to mediate a peace deal between Israel and Syria. As Syria's president opined, the Turkish mediator role "is built on the relationship between Turkey and Israel and the relationship between Turkey and Syria. Any mediator must have good ties with both parties."[143]

Syrian officials in 2009 and 2010 also recognized that the United States and Syria had a number of common interests in Iraq, several of which were created by mutual ideological hostility to Islamic fundamentalism. These interests included reducing the power of Islamists in Iraq (Syrian leaders were concerned that the growth of Islamism in the region could help make Syria a "jihadist target, especially if it concludes any sort of peace deal with Israel") and keeping Iraq free of Iranian influence as much as possible.[144] Toward these ends, Syria's vice minister stated that he anticipated "very good cooperation" with the Obama administration on counterterrorism issues against Islamic extremists.[145] As part of these efforts, in June 2009 the Syrian government agreed to let a delegation of U.S. military commanders visit Damascus to discuss ways to cooperate to further weaken the Islamist insurgency in Iraq. This is a development that American military officials had been interested in achieving for several years.[146] The Asad government also distanced itself from Iran by not interfering in the June 2009 elections in Lebanon, which resulted in the victory of a Western-backed coalition over the Hizbollah-led opposition supported by Iran.[147]

The preceding analysis does not mean that Syria's relations with America during the Obama presidency did not continue to be plagued by major conflicts. To the contrary, Syria's ongoing alliance with Iran and its continued support of terrorist groups led by Hizbollah and Hamas led Obama in May 2010 to label Syria as an "extraordinary threat" to U.S. security.[148] The president as a result renewed sanctions against Syria for another year. The

143. Quoted in Nick Bunzl, "There Are Signs Damascus Is Prepared to Talk Peace," *Los Angeles Times*, July 18, 2010.

144. Robert F. Worth, "With Isolation Over, Syria Is Happy to Talk," *New York Times*, March 27, 2009. As two regional experts express this last point (writing in 2010), "events in Iraq have brought Iran's and Syria's competing interests into even sharper relief. In Iraq today, as they did in Lebanon during the 1980s, Tehran and Damascus back different parties and espouse divergent goals: Iran seeks an Iraq under heavy Iranian influence, whereas Syria hopes to make the country an integral part of the Arab world": Robert Malley and Peter Harling, "Beyond Moderates and Militants," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 89, No. 5 (September/October 2010), p. 26.

145. Quoted in Worth, "With Isolation Over, Syria Is Happy to Talk."

146. Glenn Kessler, "Syria to Allow Visit of U.S. Military Leaders; Insurgency in Iraq Is Topic at Hand," *Washington Post*, June 3, 2009.

147. Brenda Gazzar, "How Far is Syria Ready to Go to Appease the U.S.?" *Jerusalem Post*, July 26, 2009.

148. Quoted in "Columnist Says USA Has Problem with Iran Not Syria."

key point, though, is that Obama's more conciliatory actions allowed for some important improvement in U.S.-Syrian relations compared to the last four years of the Bush presidency. In response to the Obama administration's accommodating policies, the Syrians indicated in a variety of ways that they shared a number of key interests with the United States, including supporting the Arab-Israeli peace process and reducing the power of Islamic extremists. Syrian leaders also indicated both that they wanted U.S. engagement in the region to help realize these objectives, and that they were willing to resume security cooperation with America against Islamic terrorism that had existed from 2001 to 2004. This cooperation, as I detailed above, was substantial.

The window to use ideologies to augment U.S. interests toward Syria is, however, presently closed. Israel's government led by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has stated that Israel will never withdraw entirely from the Golan Heights, even as part of a peace deal with Syria.[149] The return of this territory is one of Syria's most important foreign policy objectives, and it is one of the main bargaining chips that Western states can offer Syria that its alliance with Iran cannot. If the full return of the Golan Heights is taken off the negotiating table, it will be much harder for the United States to reduce sufficiently the incentives pushing Syria and Iran together to the point where the two states' ideological differences can become determinative of relations.

The massive popular protests pushing for democratic reforms and the ouster of authoritarian leaders that in 2011 swept across much of the Arab world, including Syria, are another factor that will significantly limit, if not preclude, ideologically induced cooperation between Syria and the United States (assuming the Asad government survives). The Syrian regime has been most likely to cooperate with the United States when Islamists were the most pressing domestic threat (e.g., in the years following 9/11). At these times, the Syrian government cooperated with one ideological enemy (the United States) to help defeat another, more dangerous internal ideological foe (Islamists).

Widespread protests in Syria calling for increased political rights and multiparty democracy are likely to reverse this alignment pattern. The greater the forces for democratic change in Syria, the more Syria's authoritarian leaders are likely both to reach out to fellow illiberals, including Islamist Iran, to contain this liberalizing threat and to distance themselves from liberal states. These predictions have already been supported. Syrian policymakers, including Asad, have attributed the protests in Syria to an

149. Dina Kraft, "Israelis Rule Out Complete Golan Departure," *Financial Times* (London), July 11, 2009; Rebecca Stoil, "Knesset Okays Referendum Bill on Ceding Parts of Golan, East Jerusalem," *Jerusalem Post*, November 23, 2010

international "conspiracy" led by the United States and Israel.[150] The more Syrian leaders blame Western states for Syria's domestic troubles, the more difficult it will be for them to negotiate (enflaming tensions with America and Israel in order to divert from domestic issues is more likely). Improved relations and closer interactions with these countries would deny the Syrian government a scapegoat for its problems and might further embolden Syrian citizens' calls for liberalization.

At the same time that the Syrian government has responded to the popular protests with increased repression and deadly force, it has apparently solidified its alliance with Iran, which, according to one analyst based in Syria, is "the only country [Syria's leaders] can trust to back them to the end." Iran, according to both American and European officials, has provided Syria not only advice on how to crush the democracy movement, but coercive supplies like tear gas and equipment to help disrupt protesters' communications, as well as billions of dollars in assistance to aid the Syrian government.[151] The survival of the Asad regime in the current revolutionary era means that the effects of ideological differences are likely to work against U.S. interests, just as these effects created opportunities to advance American security during much of the Bush administration's time in office. If, however, the Asad regime is overthrown, both increased cooperation between Syria and the United States compared to 2011 levels (assuming important liberalization of Syrian politics) and increased hostilities between Syria and Iran (a new Syrian regime that better reflects popular sentiments is unlikely to look favorably on Iran, which was active in supporting the Asad government's brutality) are more likely.

150. Michael Slackman, "Syrian Leader Blames Turmoil on 'Conspiracy,'" *New York Times*, March 30, 2011; Robert Worth, "Syrian Crisis Tests the Mettle of Its Autocratic Ruler," *New York Times*, April 24, 2011.

151. Quoted in Anthony Shadid, "Syria Broadens Deadly Crackdown on Protestors," *New York Times*, May 8, 2011; also John Vinocur, "U.S. Falls Short of Moral High Ground on Syria," *New York Times*, July 18, 2011. Curiously, Obama officials originally believed that the Syrian uprisings and the government's response would lead to a weakening of the Syrian-Iranian alliance. This error in judgment demonstrates the pitfalls for policymaking of not understanding the incentives created by ideological variables. See Mark Lander and Helene Cooper, "As Uprisings Transform Mideast, Obama Aims to Reshape the Peace Debate," *New York Times*, May 18, 2011.

## CHAPTER 4

# Ideologies and Turkish Foreign Policies after the Cold War

Of all Muslim-majority countries in the Middle East, Turkey has had the most consistently cooperative relations with the United States for the longest period of time. Turkey became formally allied to the United States when it joined NATO in 1952 and was a key ally against the Soviet Union throughout the Cold War, after which it maintained its highly cooperative relations with America, including providing valuable support during the Persian Gulf War of 1990–91 and the 2001 war in Afghanistan and attempting to mediate a number of disputes between the United States and its allies, on the one hand, and Muslim-majority countries in the Middle East on the other.

Common power threats played an important role in facilitating U.S.-Turkish cooperation over the decades. This was especially true for Turkey's admission into NATO and the subsequent close relations that developed within the context of this alliance during the Cold War. Turkey was a neighbor of the Soviet Union, and Soviet leaders in the 1940s explicitly threatened to increase their geopolitical influence in the region at Turkey's expense.[1] Turkey thus had a powerful material interest in joining forces with Western European countries and the United States in order to prevent Soviet expansion.

The pooling of resources against a common geopolitical threat explains, however, only part of the close security ties between Turkey and the United States. In fact, well before the Soviet threat to Turkey became acute, Turkish

1. For details, see Idris Bal, *Turkey's Relations with the West and the Turkic Republics: The Rise and Fall of the 'Turkish Model'* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000), pp. 16–17.

leaders wanted to align with Western states due to the effects of ideological variables. The key domestic goal of Turkey's founder—Mustafa Kemal Atatürk—was to create a modern "Western" state, meaning a secular, democratic, advanced industrial country. This goal, Turkey's key policymakers believed, required close cooperation with the established liberal democracies. Turkish leaders, in other words, felt that they had to align with liberal states abroad in order to facilitate Westernization at home. This logic is consistent with the domestic-ideological understandings of threats and consequent incentives for alliance discussed in chapter 1. The result, according to the scholar of Turkish politics Philip Robins, was that "ideology [was] at least as important as geopolitics in the formulation of and pursuit of Turkish foreign policy."[2]

The effects of ideological variables on Turkish foreign policies became in some ways more pronounced after the Cold War's end. These effects in many cases resulted in powerful forces for continued security cooperation with the United States.

Turkish leaders' international relations from 1991 to 2009 support the book's argument and hypotheses in two key ways. First, partisan ideological differences—and thus variations in ideological distances—were central to Turkish policymakers' perceptions of threats to both their domestic and international interests, and thus ultimately to choices of international allies and enemies. Ideological similarities created powerful incentives for alignment, whereas ideological differences resulted in barriers to alliances and often outright hostilities. Shared liberal ideological principles, for example, were fundamental to many Turkish leaders' interest in allying with Israel and joining the European Union (EU), just as the large ideological gap separating many Turkish policymakers from Islamist Iran resulted in high levels of threat and numerous crises between the two states. Because American leaders shared these patterns of amity and enmity, ideologies in these instances created major common interests between Turkey and the United States. Conversely, Turkish Islamists viewed Iran as an ally and Israel, the EU, and the United States as enemies, and extreme nationalists joined with Islamists in opposing Turkey's joining the EU. Significant variations in the degree of ideological differences dividing states' leaders, in short, resulted in very different threat perceptions and alignment preferences, just as Hypotheses 1 and 2 predict.

A second key way in which ideological variables shaped Turkish foreign policies in the post–Cold War period is by creating powerful incentives for ideological exportation. Numerous Turkish politicians in the 1990s and

2. Philip Robins, *Suits and Uniforms: Turkish Foreign Policy Since the Cold War* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2003), p. 159.

2000s believed that spreading Turkey's secular, democratic regime type in neighboring regions at the expense of illiberal ideologies would significantly increase Turkey's security. Because American leaders concurred with this assessment and supported these efforts, this ideological objective resulted in another important set of common interests with the United States. The goal of ideological socialization and the security calculations behind it support the predictions of Hypothesis 3A. Analysts that attribute Turkey's foreign policies to material factors such as increasing relative power or geography can explain neither of these two sets of findings.

This chapter develops in detail these points. I begin my analysis with an examination of the major ideological beliefs of Turkey's governing parties in the post–Cold War years.

## THE IDEOLOGIES OF TURKEY'S PRINCIPAL POLITICAL PARTIES

From 1991 to 2009, seven parties played a significant role in the development of Turkish politics: the Democratic Left (DLP), Justice and Development (JDP), Motherland (MP), Nationalist Action (NAP), Republican People's (RPP), True Path (TPP), and Welfare (WP) parties. Each of these parties in this period either governed alone (in the case of the Justice and Development Party) or participated in a coalition government. In addition to these civilian parties, Turkey's military influenced Turkish politics in major ways, most notably by threatening to overthrow the civilian government if the latter's domestic or international policies diverged too greatly from military leaders' ideological and policy preferences.[3] These eight groups (seven parties plus the military) can be divided into four main ideological groups: Kemalists, conservatives, Islamists, and nationalists.

In the 1980s and 1990s, the main center-right parties were the Motherland and True Path parties, and the primary left-of-center ones were the Republican People's and Democratic Left parties. The former are often labeled "conservatives" and the latter (plus the military) "Kemalists." Although conservatives and Kemalists were dedicated to major ideological differences, which I detail below, they also shared key ideological goals. Most important, all these parties in the post–Cold War years were dedicated to important liberalizing objectives. For example, Turgut Özal—who

3. Military leaders ousted Turkey's elected government on four different occasions: in 1960, 1971, 1980, and 1997. As recently as April 2007, the Turkish military threatened "to become more openly involved" in politics if the Justice and Development Party tried to elect Foreign Minister Abdullah Gül to the presidency. Suzan Fraser, "Turkish Military Issues Election Warning," Associated Press Online, April 28, 2007.

was the founder of the Motherland Party, prime minister from 1983 to 1989, and president from 1989 to 1993—championed a number of laws that significantly increased citizens' political and economic liberties. Motherland Party governments in the 1980s and 1990s liberalized Turkey's economy by massively reducing the role of the government in favor of economic privatization and opening the country to higher levels of international trade and competition,[4] abolished a number of laws that curtailed freedom of thought and association, recognized Turkish citizens' rights to take grievances to the European Commission on Human Rights, signed and ratified the European and United Nations Conventions against Torture and the United Nations Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, and tried to reduce the power of Turkey's military by bringing its budget under greater public scrutiny.[5]

The True Path Party possessed liberalizing domestic objectives similar to those of the Motherland Party. Its leaders were also dedicated to free-market capitalism, though with a more extensive commitment to social welfare policies than the Motherland Party.[6] Human rights, especially under the leadership of Süleyman Demirel (prime minister after the Cold War from 1991 to 1993 and president from 1993 to 2000) also played a prominent role in the party's discourse and policies. In 1991, TPP leaders integrated human rights into the party's charter, and made the advancement of this issue central to their electoral campaign.[7] Indeed, "[s]ocial welfare, democratization, and support for the free market were all designed to build the party's popularity. Democratization referred to anti-militarism, the rule of law, and expansion of political participation. This anti-militarist stance and rhetoric [were] probably the most radical any political party had adopted in Turkey."[8] Consistent with these objectives, when in power the TPP passed laws that much better protected the rights of the accused and ratified constitutional amendments that significantly expanded the rights of various groups, including women, to participate in political

4. Ersin Kalaycioğlu, "The Motherland Party: The Challenge of Institutionalization in a Charismatic Leader Party," in Barry Rubin and Metin Heper, eds., *Political Parties in Turkey* (London: Frank Cass, 2002), p. 46; and Dankwart A. Rustow, "Turkey's Liberal Revolution," *Middle East Review*, Vol. 17, No. 3 (Spring 1985), pp. 5–11.

5. Feride Acar, "Turgut Özal: Pious Agent of Liberal Transformation," in Metin Heper and Sabri Sayari, eds., *Political Leaders and Democracy in Turkey* (New York: Lexington Books, 2002), pp. 176–78.

6. Ümit Cizre Sakallioğlu, "Liberalism, Democracy and the Turkish Centre-Right: The Identity Crisis of the True Path Party," *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 32, No. 2 (April 1996), p. 148.

7. Sakallioğlu, "Liberalism, Democracy and the Turkish Centre-Right," p. 151.

8. Ümit Cizre, "From Ruler to Pariah: The Life and Times of the True Path Party," in Rubin and Heper eds., *Political Parties in Turkey*, p. 87; also p. 88.

parties.[9] The party also introduced bills designed to bring the military more fully under civilian control.[10]

The most important left-of-center parties—the Republican People's and Democratic Left parties—were also dedicated to important liberalizing goals in the post–Cold War years. (The RPP, along with all other parties, was banned after the 1980 military coup. New parties, led by the Social Democratic Populist and Democratic Left parties, inherited the RPP's ideological mantle and many of its leaders. The RPP was reestablished in 1992, and the Social Democratic Populist Party united with it in 1995.) As one scholar of Turkish politics (writing in 2002) explains for this period, "[w]hile both in power and in opposition, the main emphasis of [Republican People's Party leaders] has been on liberties."[11] (After 2002, these politicians moved in a more illiberal direction, for reasons I discuss more fully below.) RPP politicians after the Cold War's end placed particular emphasis on reducing the role of the military in government and better protecting the rights of women and the accused.[12] When part of a coalition government with the True Path Party from 1991 to 1995, the Social Democratic Populist Party (the chief heir to the RPP when it was banned) worked to pass laws that made the police more accountable and liberalized the rules of detainment. Party leaders also played a key role in changing the constitution to expand "the right to participate in political parties for groups such as women, youths, university lecturers, and union activists."[13] These last efforts were part of the emphasis, according to a 2002 RPP party brochure, on political participation as the "historical prerequisite of democracy and progress."[14]

The Democratic Left Party was founded in 1985 by Bülent Ecevit, who was a longtime member of the RPP. Under Ecevit's leadership while prime minister from 1999 to 2002 (and with particular support from one of his party's coalition partners, the Motherland Party), Turkey passed a number of major liberalizing reforms. In 1999, Ecevit's government changed Turkey's constitution to remove military judges from state security courts (this

9. Ayşe Güneş-Ayata, "The Republican People's Party," in Rubin and Heper eds., *Political Parties in Turkey*, p. 118.

10. Cizre, "From Ruler to Pariah," p. 88.

11. Güneş-Ayata, "The Republican People's Party," p. 117. See also Sinan Ciddi, *Kemalism in Turkish Politics: The Republican People's Party, Secularism and Nationalism* (London: Routledge, 2009), pp. 93–94. "Republican People's Party leaders" refers to those individuals in the RPP and the inheritor parties that were established after the 1980 coup when the RPP was banned.

12. Güneş-Ayata, "The Republican People's Party," pp. 112–14, 117–18.

13. Güneş-Ayata, "The Republican People's Party," p. 118.

14. Quoted in Binnur Özkeçeci-Taner, *The Role of Ideas in Coalition Government Foreign Policymaking: The Case of Turkey Between 1991 and 1992* (Dordrecht: Republic of Letters, 2009), p. 41.

was one of the reforms that European states insisted upon before agreeing to formally consider Turkey becoming a member of the EU). This government also passed laws that both increased punishment for policemen found guilty of torture and granted amnesty for some individuals imprisoned for "thought crimes" (such as expressing "extreme" political views). In 2001 and 2002, "the Turkish parliament passed a series of reforms that significantly eased restrictions on human rights."[15] These laws, which included changes to the constitution, better protected core political freedoms, including granting the right to a fair trial, abolishing the death penalty in peacetime, increasing obstacles to the prohibition of political parties, removing penalties for criticizing the military and other state institutions, and reducing the power of the military in political decisions. Key steps in this last area were the decisions to add more civilians to the National Security Council (NSC) and to make its decisions less binding for the civilian Council of Ministers. (The NSC is an "advisory" body that was historically dominated by military leaders, whose recommendations were almost invariably followed.)

A central point to be taken away from the preceding analysis is that from the end of the Cold War until 2003 (when the RPP and DLP moved in a more illiberal direction domestically), there was important ideological agreement among Turkey's most powerful parties of the left and right in favor of important domestic liberalization. This explains why the direction of Turkey's domestic evolution in these years—despite frequent changes in governing parties—was clearly in a liberal trajectory. A good indication of this ideological consensus is that the leaders of the four parties discussed above supported the implementation of the "Copenhagen criteria" necessary for accession to the EU. These criteria were major liberalizing reforms that required "stability of institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights and respect for and protection of minorities, and the existence of a functioning market economy." According to the scholars Ergun Özbudun and Serap Yazici, all of the changes to Turkey's constitution after the Cold War's end "were to improve the protection of fundamental rights, to bolster the rule of law, and to limit the military's prerogatives in government. In addition to these constitutional amendments, a large number of ordinary laws were also modified in the same direction."[16]

It is worth highlighting that even the Turkish military—despite overthrowing the civilian government on four different occasions and threatening to do so at others—exhibited some liberal tendencies. The military

15. F. Stephen Larrabee and Ian O. Lesser, *Turkish Foreign Policy in an Age of Uncertainty* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2003), p. 53.

16. Ergun Özbudun and Serap Yazici, *Democratization Reforms in Turkey (1993–2004)* (Istanbul: TESEV Publications, 2004), p. 13.

always restored the republican system of government after its coups. The new constitutions implemented after these coups were in some cases (such as after the 1960 coup) more liberal than the previous one; other constitutions—such as the one issued after the 1980 coup—severely restricted democratic rights.[17] Military leaders in the late 1990s and early 2000s supported the implementation of some liberalizing reforms that were necessary to gain Turkey's admission to the European Union. Officers agreed even to some reforms that limited the power of the military. Joining the EU was the crowning achievement of the modernization and Westernization processes that Kemalists in the military had long advocated, and was thus worth the sacrifice of some of the military's institutional interests.[18]

The important ideological agreement among the four conservative and leftist parties discussed above should not obscure, however, their major ideological differences. The two main ideological issues that divided the left and the military on the one hand (collectively labeled "Kemalists"), and the political right ("conservatives") on the other, involved religion and ethnicity.[19] Kemalists were dedicated to assertive, uncompromising understandings of secularism and nationalism, whereas conservatives possessed more accommodating positions on both of these issues.

Almost all Turkish politicians from across the political spectrum in the years examined claimed allegiance to the principle of state secularism (the Islamists in the Welfare Party were the most vocal exception to this agreement among Turkey's governing parties after 1991). What "secularism" meant, however, varied by ideological group and party affiliation. Members of the RPP and DLP, along with the Turkish military, adhered to an extreme understanding of this concept.[20] Their views of state secularism are better understood as "laicism." Laicists in general advocate that the state take aggressive actions to remove religion from the political and public realm and confine it to the private sphere. These actions often entail the government regulating religious activity and education.[21]

17. William Hale and Ergun Özbudun, *Islamism, Democracy and Liberalism in Turkey: The Case of the AKP* (London: Routledge, 2010), p. 81.

18. On the preceding points, see Ersel Aydinli, Nihat Ali Özcan, and Dogan Akyaz, "The Turkish Military's March Toward Europe," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 85, No. 1 (January/February 2006), pp. 77–78, 84–85; Hale and Özbudun, *Islamism, Democracy and Liberalism in Turkey*, pp. 81, 87–88).

19. Ömer Taşpinar, "The Old Turks' Revolt: When Radical Secularism Endangers Democracy," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 86, No. 6 (November/December 2007), p. 118; Ciddi, *Kemalism in Turkish Politics*, p. 103; Ergun Özbudun, "Changes and Continuities in the Turkish Party System," *Representation*, Vol. 42, No. 2 (2006), pp. 134–35.

20. Taşpinar, "The Old Turks' Revolt," p. 118; M. Hakan Yavuz, *Secularism and Muslim Democracy in Turkey* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 154–55.

21. Elizabeth Shakman Hurd, *The Politics of Secularism in International Relations* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), pp. 29, 93.

Consistent with these general laicist views, Kemalists believed that progress and modernization in Turkey necessitated that Islam be eliminated from political affairs and that the religion's social dimension be regulated by the state. Thus, for example, Atatürk abolished religious schools in Turkey. Kemalists also insisted that the Turkish government control all of the mosques in Turkey and employ their imams as state employees.[22]

For Turkish laicists, almost any action that brought religion into the public—let alone the political—arena was a threat to the Turkish regime. Thus the Turkish Constitutional Court (which was dominated by Kemalists) ruled in 1997 that secularism is not just the separation of religion and state, but "separation of religion and worldly affairs . . . [Secularism] means separation of social life, education, family, economics, law, manners, dress codes, etc., from religion."[23] This extreme position explains, for example, why Kemalists opposed women wearing headscarves in universities. To Kemalists, headscarves would be a socially visible "symbol of a world view that opposes . . . the fundamental principles of our Republic."[24]

On issues of ethnicity, Kemalists—once again including RPP, DLP, and military leaders—adopted similarly uncompromising positions. Kemalists rejected multicultural policies that recognized the legitimacy of minority or non-"Turkish" cultures and nationalist sentiments. As the scholar of Turkish politics Ömer Taşpinar explains, a key component of the "ideology promoted by Kemalism was assimilationist nationalism. Modern Turkey pursued an active policy of assimilation of its Muslim minorities. 'Turkishness' came to be defined as a common national, linguistic, and territorial identity."[25] Kemalists viewed any policies that, in the words of the military's chief of staff, General Yaşar Büyükanit (speaking in 2007), were "creating minorities in Turkey" as a mortal threat to the regime.[26] Kurdish nationalism, culture, and language were especially dangerous from the Kemalists' perspective, and thus must not be supported.

22. Ahmet T. Kuru, "Reinterpretation of Secularism in Turkey: The Case of the Justice and Development Party," in M. Hakan Yavuz, ed., *The Emergence of a New Turkey: Democracy and the AK Parti* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2006), pp. 139, 145; *Hurd, The Politics of Secularism in International Relations*, pp. 66, 71.

23. Quoted in Kuru, "Reinterpretation of Secularism in Turkey," p. 144; see also pp. 136, 145.

24. Quoted in Kuru, "Reinterpretation of Secularism in Turkey," p. 147. The quotation is from a 1984 unanimous ruling by the Constitutional Court.

25. Taşpinar, "The Old Turks' Revolt," p. 119; see also ibid., p. 118; Ciddi, *Kemalism in Turkish Politics*, pp. 7, 93; Hale and Özbudun, *Islamism, Democracy and Liberalism in Turkey*, p. 75.

26. Quoted in Michael M. Gunter and M. Hakan Yavuz, "Turkish Paradox: Progressive Islamists Versus Reactionary Secularists," *Critique: Critical Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 16, No. 3 (Fall 2007), p. 294. For similar quotations, see Hale and Özbudun, *Islamism, Democracy and Liberalism in Turkey*, pp. 77, 87.

Assertive secular and nationalist ideological principles became increasingly more important to the RPP in the 2000s at the expense of a commitment to liberal political goals. As I discussed above, RPP leaders in the 1990s were dedicated to important liberalizing objectives, which included expanding individuals' rights and diminishing the coercive power of the state. After the 2002 general elections, however, the RPP moved from emphasizing social democratic issues to an "authoritarian Kemalist outlook."[27] As Ziya Öniş explains, after 2002 the RPP "effectively relegated to the background . . . many of the issues that could have formed the basis of a social democratic agenda, such as the reform of the state's economic role, the elimination of corruption, the decentralization of decision making and the provision of public services . . . [as well as] policies designed to combat gender inequality and women's subordinate position in Turkish society." In place of a social democratic agenda, the RPP "focused single-mindedly on a narrow understanding of secularism" and exclusionary nationalism that were devoid of "any enthusiasm for democratization reforms."[28]

In order to protect their understandings of secularism and nationalism, RPP leaders in the 2000s supported a number of illiberal domestic policies. Many of these politicians, for example, became forceful opponents of the proposal to abolish Article 301 of the Turkish Penal Code, which had been used as a means of limiting free speech on the grounds of insulting "Turkishness."[29] The party also increasingly allied with the military and the right-wing Nationalist Action Party to try to limit domestic reforms that increased religious and cultural freedoms.[30] (I discuss the NAP's policies in more detail below.) After 2002, the RPP voted against laws that would have expanded free speech and returned property to religious minorities, both of which were central to Turkey's attempts to join the EU.[31]

27. Ciddi, *Kemalism in Turkish Politics*, p. 96. For similar assessments, see Ömer Taşpinar, "The Anatomy of Anti-Americanism in Turkey," Brookings Institution paper, November 16, 2005, available at http://www.brookings.edu/views/articles/fellows/taspinar20051116.pdf, pp. 115–16 (accessed November 15, 2011); Yavuz, *Secularism and Muslim Democracy in Turkey*, p. 265; and Gerassimos Karabelias, "The Military Institution, Atatürk's Principles, and Turkey's Sisyphean Quest for Democracy," *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 45, No. 1 (January 2009), p. 63. I concentrate on the Republican People's Party because the Democratic Left Party was virtually unrepresented in parliament after 2002.

28. Ziya Öniş, "Conservative Globalists Versus Defensive Nationalists: Political Parties and Paradoxes of Europeanization in Turkey," *Journal of Southern Europe and the Balkans*, Vol. 9, No. 3 (December 2007), p. 257.

29. Öniş, "Conservative Globalists Versus Defensive Nationalists," pp. 255, 257.

30. Gunter and Yavuz, "Turkish Paradox," pp. 295–96; Öniş, "Conservative Globalists Versus Defensive Nationalists," p. 257.

31. Sabrina Tavernise, "In Turkey, Bitter Feud Has Roots in History," *New York Times*, June 22, 2008.

The two most important factors that led RPP leaders to emphasize the secularist and nationalist components of Kemalist ideology at the expense of more liberal dimensions that comprised a social democratic agenda were the electoral victory in 2002 of the religiously oriented Justice and Development Party and America's invasion of Iraq in 2003. Many Kemalists believed that JDP leaders, though the latter proclaimed to be Turkish conservatives, were in reality closet Islamists who were dedicated to the overthrow of state secularism. America's invasion of Iraq increased Kemalist leaders' fears that an independent Kurdistan in Iraq was probable, which would potentially have fueled Kurdish ethnic separatism in Turkey. (I examine both the JDP's ideological principles and the effects of America's attack on Iraq on Turkish politics later in the chapter.) As these dangers increased, many RPP leaders were willing to support the illiberal policies discussed above in order to address them.

Center-right politicians in Turkey adopted very different policies on secularism and ethnicity than those advocated by the RPP, the DLP, and the Turkish military. Hence my division of these two groups into different ideological categories of conservatives and Kemalists, despite their shared commitment in the 1990s to various liberalizing ideological objectives.

In contrast to the aggressive secularism advocated by Kemalists, Turkish conservatives in the Motherland and True Path parties subscribed to a "passive secularism."[32] Passive secularists tend to believe that religion has positive effects on society, including increasing social cohesion and inclining personal and political conduct in an ethical direction. Given these views, passive secularists believe that although governments should not support particular religious beliefs, the state should not be hostile to religion either, and religion should have some public visibility. Thus, for example, governments led by the Motherland Party on several occasions passed laws that allowed female university students to wear headscarves, and Prime Minister Tansu Çiller of the True Path Party wanted to pass similar legislation (these laws were struck down by Turkey's Constitutional Court for violating state secularism).[33] Prime Minister and later President Demirel of the TPP also consistently supported graduates of Imam-Hatip (prayer leaders and preachers) religious high schools to be able to enter universities based on the same criteria as any other student. Kemalists opposed this policy.[34]

Turkish conservatives in the Motherland Party took similar compromising stands on ethnic divisions (the True Path Party, especially under Çiller's leadership, was more sympathetic to Kemalists' views on nationalism,

32. Kuru, "Reinterpretation of Secularism in Turkey," pp. 137, 139.

33. Hale and Özbudun, *Islamism, Democracy and Liberalism in Turkey*, pp. 71–72; Ciddi, *Kemalism in Turkish Politics*, p. 84.

34. Hale and Özbudun, *Islamism, Democracy and Liberalism in Turkey*, pp. 68–69.

and thus often supported the military's Kurdish policies).[35] While, for example, MP politicians staunchly opposed Kurdish secessionism, many of these individuals recognized the legitimacy and separateness of Kurdish identity and culture.[36] The goal of the Motherland Party when led by Turgut Özal, for example, was to "co-opt, rather than destroy, Kurdish dissent." Özal's government was thus a supporter of Kurdish cultural rights and the peaceful, negotiated resolution of disputes with Kurdish leaders.[37] One of the most important developments on this issue came in 1991, when the MP government lifted the ban on the use of the Kurdish language.[38]

The JDP, which is the remaining major conservative party that governed in the post–Cold War years, shared with other conservatives a dedication to liberalism, passive secularism, and some multiculturalism. Indeed, JDP leaders' views on these issues, especially the first two, were an intensification of previous conservative positions, so much so that their beliefs can be considered sui generis in Turkish politics.[39]

One of the key distinguishing features of JDP leaders' ideological principles was that the advancement of Islamic identity and interests was more central to their world view than to those of other conservative politicians. As the scholar M. Hakan Yavuz explains, "most ministers, advisors and parliamentarians of the AKP [JDP] stress Islam as their core identity and define national interests within an Islamic framework . . . The leadership of the AKP believes that Turkey in general and the AKP in particular represent Islamic civilization."[40] Consistent with these views, JDP leaders claimed that Islam should be a key unifying social force in Turkey, regardless of other cultural or ethnic differences.[41]

JDP leaders' views on the centrality of Islam to Turkish society can be traced to the ancestry of the party. The JDP was established largely by reformers who were members of Islamist parties (Welfare and Virtue) that had been banned from political activity by Turkey's Constitutional Court in 1998 and 2001, respectively.

Despite the political roots of the JDP and shared emphasis with Islamists on the centrality of Islam to Turkish social identity, the party's central

35. Cizre, "From Ruler to Pariah," pp. 89, 92, 98.

36. Yavuz, *Secularism and Muslim Democracy in Turkey*, p. 36.

37. Ömer Taşpinar, "Turkey's Middle East Policies: Between Neo-Ottomanism and Kemalism," *Carnegie Papers*, No. 10 (September 2008), p. 11.

38. Acar, "Turgut Özal," pp. 176–78.

39. As William Hale and Ergun Özbudun express this point, the "AKP's [JDP's] commitment to liberal and pluralist values seems stronger, and its sensibilities to religious values deeper than the past or present centre-right parties" (Hale and Özbudun, *Islamism, Democracy and Liberalism in Turkey*, p. 27).

40. Yavuz, *Secularism and Muslim Democracy in Turkey*, p. 209.

41. Yavuz, *Secularism and Muslim Democracy in Turkey*, pp. 264–65.

ideological objectives were major breaks from those of its Islamist predecessors, especially the Welfare Party (though many Kemalists continued to view the JDP as a mortal threat to state secularism). JDP leaders described themselves as center-right politicians whose ideological beliefs were best described as ones of "conservative democracy."[42] The result was that despite "initial fears by many concerning the party's Islamist origins or credentials, the AKP [JDP] proved to be a party of moderate standing and reformist orientation."[43]

JDP leaders abandoned the Islamist roots of their party in two key ways. First, these politicians switched from promoting political to *social* Islam. JDP politicians, in other words, asserted both that Islam was a key source of Turkish identity and that religion was central to creating virtuous citizens and thus a healthy community. Unlike political Islamists, however, JDP decision makers proclaimed allegiance to the principle of state secularism. The JDP's 2002 political program, for example, claimed that it was "unacceptable to make use of religion for political, economic, and other interests, or to put pressure on people who think and live differently by using religion."[44]

JDP leaders' understanding of secularism was, however, an expression of the "passive" variety of this principle that I discussed above (though these politicians adhered to an even more liberal variety of this concept than those of other conservative parties). JDP politicians believed that Islam "should have the primary role in society but not in the state."[45] Thus while the government should not establish particular religious beliefs, it should not be hostile to religion either. Citizens should enjoy very broad religious liberties that included social expressions of religiosity. JDP leaders explicitly looked to the American understanding of secularism—which proscribes state establishment of religion, but allows a role for religion in public life and protects expansive religious freedoms—as a model that Turkey should emulate.[46]

It is also worth noting that the form of Islam publicly championed by JDP leaders is liberal in key dimensions. When in power, JDP leaders commissioned reformist scholars at Ankara University, acting under the

42. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, "Conservative Democracy and the Globalization of Freedom," in Yavuz, ed., *The Emergence of a New Turkey*, p. 334.

43. Ziya Öniş, "Contesting for Turkey's Political 'Centre,' Domestic Politics, Identity Conflicts and the Controversy over EU Membership," *Journal of Contemporary European Studies*, Vol. 18, No. 3 (September 2010), p. 363.

44. Quoted in Kuru, "Reinterpretation of Secularism in Turkey," p. 142.

45. Yavuz, *Secularism and Muslim Democracy in Turkey*, p. 157.

46. Kuru, "Reinterpretation of Secularism in Turkey," pp. 142–43; Hurd, *The Politics of Secularism in International Relations*, pp. 37–40.

auspices of the Directorate of Religious Affairs (which oversees the country's mosques and appoints imams) to reinterpret the Hadith (comments said to be derived from the prophet Mohammad) and Islamic law. This reinterpretation was designed to fuse "Muslim beliefs and tradition with European and Western philosophical methods and principles." The result, when the project is completed, will be a "redefine[d] Islam as a modern, dynamic force" that better incorporates Western understandings of human rights.[47]

While JDP politicians were socially religious, they were politically liberal. The liberalism of the party constitutes a second way in which the party broke with its Islamist political predecessors. The religiosity and liberalism of the JDP were, in fact, closely connected. Party leaders believed that the only way that religion could flourish in Turkey was if basic political rights—including religious freedom—were better protected. These politicians thus came to be some of the most forceful advocates of political liberalization in Turkey. JDP policymakers called for tolerance for all religious groups and adopted the UN Charter of Human Rights and the European Charter for the Protection of Human Rights and Basic Liberties as core ideological references for the party.[48] These politicians also passed major liberalizing reforms after coming to power. Among these were constitutional amendments that abolished the death penalty in all circumstances; reinforced equality between the sexes;[49] and stipulated that in cases of conflict between domestic laws and international agreements concerning fundamental human rights, international agreements took precedence. Overall, JDP governments implemented liberalizing legislation in a number of areas, including freedoms of expression, association, assembly, and religion; the prevention of torture; minority rights; and civil-military relations.[50] Many of the significant liberalizing reforms JDP governments passed in the 2000s were designed to change Turkish domestic politics in order to meet the criteria necessary for Turkey to join the EU.

JDP leaders' views on nationalism were related to their other liberalizing objectives. According to Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan in a 2003 statement, "We [the JDP] have our red lines. Our first red line is the rejection

47. Ian Traynor, "Turkey Strives for 21st Century Form of Islam," *The Guardian* (London), February 27, 2008.

48. Metin Heper and Şule Toktaş, "Islam, Modernity, and Democracy in Contemporary Turkey: The Case of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan," *The Muslim World*, Vol. 93, No. 2 (April 2003), p. 176.

49. A 2004 constitutional amendment stated that "women and men have equal rights. The State is obliged to put this equality into effect" (quoted in Özbudun and Yazici, *Democratization Reforms in Turkey (1993–2004)*, p. 24).

50. For details, see Hale and Özbudun, *Islamism, Democracy and Liberalism in Turkey*, pp. 57–62.

of nationalism based on ethnic origins. The Turks would express their Turkishness, the Kurds their Kurdishness . . . but citizenship in the Republic of Turkey is the foremost identity for all of us." Erdoğan likened his party's understanding of citizenship and identity to America's: "Like different ethnic groups who feel and define themselves as Americans, we must reach a *Türkiyelilik* [an all-inclusive identity] consciousness."[51] To Erdoğan, all Turkish citizens share a common supraidentity, but they also may legitimately claim different (e.g., Kurdish) subidentities.[52] In 2005, Erdoğan became the first prime minister to acknowledge that "the state made mistakes about the Kurdish issue," and that the best way to deal with this issue was through greater respect for pluralism and democracy.[53] The JDP government in 2008 approved a public television channel in Kurdish; in 2009 it approved the study of the Kurdish language at private Turkish universities, which was another step in ending the long-time ban on the language; and in 2010 it allowed candidates for public office to campaign in Kurdish.[54]

The JDP's ideology, in sum, is best described as a "hybrid" one that is unique in Turkish politics.[55] Although the JDP was positioned and self-identified as a center-right party, its leaders emphasized Islamic identity and interests more than the Motherland and True Path parties did. Although the JDP was descended from Islamist parties, its leaders' commitment to liberalism and state secularism (which necessitated a shift from political to social Islam) meant a repudiation of core Islamist principles. By stressing both Islamic and liberal identities, the JDP was in important ways "in between" Islamist and liberal ideological groups. JDP leaders, in other words, saw themselves as tied to both the West (through their commitment to political liberalism) and the Islamic world (through their dedication to social Islam). Hence, for example, their claim that Turkey was uniquely positioned to be able to take the lead in forging an "Alliance of Civilizations" between the

51. Both quotations from Yüksel Taşkın, "Upsurge of the Extreme Right in Turkey: The Intra-Right Struggle to Redefine 'True Nationalism and Islam,'" *Middle Eastern Studies,* Vol. 44, No. 1 (January 2008), p. 137.

52. Nora Onar, "Kemalists, Islamists, and Liberals: Shifting Patterns of Confrontation and Consensus, 2002–06," *Turkish Studies*, Vol. 8, No. 2 (June 2007), p. 284.

53. Quoted in Bülent Aras and Rabia Karakaya Polat, "From Conflict to Cooperation: Desecuritization of Turkey's Relations with Syria and Iran," *Security Dialogue*, Vol. 39, No. 5 (October 2008), p. 499; Hale and Özbudun, *Islamism, Democracy and Liberalism in Turkey*, p. 77.

54. Sebnem Arsu, "Turkey: Kurdish Studies Approved," *New York Times*, September 11, 2009; Sebnem Arsu, "Turkey Plans to Ease Restrictions on Kurds," *New York Times*, November 14, 2009; Susanne Güsten, "Big Changes Open Politics to Turkish Minorities," *New York Times*, April 6, 2011.

55. Sultan Tepe, "A Pro-Islamic Party? Promises and Limits of Turkey's Justice and Development Party," in Yavuz, ed., *The Emergence of a New Turkey*, pp. 121–22; Ramazan Kilinç, "Turkey and the Alliance of Civilizations: Norm Adoption as a Survival Strategy," *Insight Turkey*, Vol. 11, No. 3 (2009), p. 68.

Western and Islamic worlds.[56] Yavuz describes the JDP's unique hybrid ideology as "a new form of political language . . . [that] is neither secular nor Islamist; it is syncretic and creole."[57] Or, as the leader of the party, Erdoğan, explained in January 2004, the JDP "represents a new political style and understanding in Turkish political life . . . We now witness not a differentiation and polarization of ideologies with sharp and bold lines of division between them, but the formation of new political courses accompanying the pervasiveness of different ideologies."[58]

In addition to Kemalism and conservatism, a third ideology to which governing parties in Turkey subscribed after 1991 was political Islamism. The Welfare Party, which led a coalition government in Turkey in 1996 and 1997, was dedicated to this set of ideological beliefs. Like Islamists in other countries, Welfare politicians sought the Islamization of Turkish society and state.[59] They publicly argued, for example, that Turkey should have several different legal systems that were determined by the will of local communities. This plan would have opened up the possibility that some areas in Turkey would have been ruled according to Sharia.[60] Some party leaders argued privately that their goal was to implement Islamic law for the entire country.[61] When in power in the mid-1990s, Welfare politicians passed a number of laws that reflected an Islamist agenda, including restricting the sale of alcohol in their districts, changing local symbols and landmarks to reflect a more religious tone, and increasing mosque construction. Leaders of the party also asserted that a central political objective was to promote "Islamic" interests against the deleterious effects of Western cultural influences.[62]

Although WP leaders did not advocate the use of force to achieve the Islamization of society, they did exhibit a number of illiberal tendencies.

56. The "Alliance of Civilizations" was an UN initiative cosponsored by Turkey and Spain. This concept was a major theme and objective of JDP leadership. Prime Minister Erdoğan, for example, addressed this project in almost all of his speeches during the 2009 elections, the party's group meetings in parliament, and his addresses to the nation (Kilinç, "Turkey and the Alliance of Civilizations," p. 70).

57. Yavuz, *Secularism and Muslim Democracy in Turkey*, p. 279.

58. Erdoğan, "Conservative Democracy and the Globalization of Freedom," p. 334.

59. Binnaz Toprak, "Islam and Democracy in Turkey," in Ali Çarkoğlu and Barry Rubin, eds., *Religion and Politics in Turkey* (London: Routledge, 2006), pp. 33, 40; Gareth Jenkins, *Political Islam in Turkey: Running West, Heading East?* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), pp. 155–61; Hale and Özbudun, *Islamism, Democracy and Liberalism in Turkey*, p. 9.

60. Haldun Gulalp, "Political Islam in Turkey: The Rise and Fall of the Refah Party," *The Muslim World*, Vol. 89, No. 1 (January 1999), p. 28; R. Quinn Mecham, "From the Ashes of Virtue, a Promise of Light: The Transformation of Political Islam in Turkey," *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 25, No. 2 (March 2004), p. 343.

61. Jenkins, *Political Islam in Turkey*, pp. 155–56.

62. Ahmet Yildiz, "Politico-Religious Discourse of Political Islam in Turkey: The Parties of National Outlook," *The Muslim World*, Vol. 93, No. 2 (April 2003), pp. 190–92; Gulalp, "Political Islam in Turkey," pp. 24, 26, 38; Mecham, "From the Ashes of Virtue, a Promise of Light," p. 343.

Most alarmingly, their commitment to democracy was low. Future Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan, for example, stated that democracy was not an end in itself but a means to establish an Islamic order. Erbakan even stated in October 1996 (after his party was elected to power) that soon the WP "would have so many members that elections would no longer be necessary."[63] Welfare politicians also rarely mentioned pluralism and the separation of religion and state as worthy political objectives.[64]

Welfare leaders were clear that their Islamic identity was the key variable that differentiated their party from others in Turkey, which is another defining attribute of Islamist parties.[65] These differences were cast in highly moralistic, intolerant terms that frequently contrasted the core beliefs of the WP with those of Turkish politicians (both Kemalists and conservatives) who subscribed to Western ideological principles. Future Prime Minister Erbakan, for example, claimed that only those who joined the party could serve God.[66] Other WP leaders asserted that there were not several parties in Turkey, "only two . . . Welfare, and all those who unite in 'aping' the West."[67] A political strategist for the party stated in his appeal for votes that "what is going on since the time of Adam is the war between the truth and the wrong. Nowadays the main struggle in the world is . . . between Islam and those belonging to the Western Club [i.e., all other parties in Turkey] . . . To deliver . . . votes to the parties of Western Club so that they use them to destroy Islam and humanity is a kind of self-suicide. [Erbakan's victory] is the beginning of a new World and a new era."[68] Such statements highlight the major ideological differences dividing the WP from other parties in Turkey.

The right-wing Nationalist Action Party embodied a fourth ideology among Turkey's governing parties in the post–Cold War era, namely an extreme nationalism that bordered on the xenophobic. NAP members believed in the superiority of "Turkish culture," and asserted that the primary goal of both domestic and foreign policies should be to preserve this culture against domestic and international enemies. This overriding imperative required individual self-sacrifice for a strong state. According to Yavuz, the NAP's "ideology developed an anti-individual, anti-intellectual, heavily communitarian and statist model for leading the Turkish world. The nationalism of the MHP [NAP] looked on the state as the foremost entity and preached that the nation should not hesitate to sacrifice anything for its

63. Hale and Özbudun, *Islamism, Democracy and Liberalism in Turkey*, p. 7; also pp. 8–9.
64. Ibid.
65. Yavuz, *Secularism and Muslim Democracy in Turkey*, p. 3.
66. Yildiz, "Politico-Religious Discourse of Political Islam in Turkey," pp. 193, 205.
67. Quoted in Mecham, "From the Ashes of Virtue, a Promise of Light," p. 356, note 13.
68. Quoted in Yildiz, "Politico-Religious Discourse of Political Islam in Turkey," p. 207, note 28.

preservation . . . This model negates and subordinates diverse sub-identities to a monolithic Turkish nationalism."[69]

Given these positions, it is not surprising that NAP leaders rejected core elements of both economic and political liberalism. They feared that economic liberalization and consequent integration into the globalized capitalist system would weaken the autonomy of the Turkish state while subverting Turkish culture to Western values. NAP politicians also tended to oppose individual rights that eroded state power. Policies that granted rights to different ethno-cultural groups—particularly the Kurds—were especially anathema to the NAP, as such actions directly challenged their belief in a monolithic culture for all of Turkey.[70]

While a coalition partner with the Democratic Left and Motherland parties from 1999 to 2002, NAP leaders consistently opposed laws that liberalized Turkey's economy and politics. Although many of these laws were passed, NAP opposition often caused either their delay or their watering down so that the changes were not as progressive and comprehensive as they otherwise would have been.[71] The NAP's opposition to liberalizing policies led to the government's collapse in 2002 and an early call for a general election.[72]

As explained above, assertive nationalism was also a defining characteristic of Kemalism. I divide Kemalists and the NAP into different ideological groups, because the former, especially in the 1990s, were much more liberal on other issues than was the NAP. However, as the left-of-center RPP moved in a more illiberal direction after 2002, its leaders' ideological objectives became more congruent with those of the right-wing NAP. The result was increasingly similar political preferences and cooperation among these groups.[73]

## IDEOLOGICAL DISTANCES, THREAT PERCEPTIONS, AND CHOICES OF ALLIES AND ENEMIES

This section examines the effects of the major ideological differences among Turkey's governing parties, described above, on leaders' perceptions of threat to both their domestic and international interests and consequent

69. M. Hakan Yavuz, "The Politics of Fear: The Rise of the Nationalist Action Party (MHP) in Turkey," *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 56, No. 2 (Spring 2002), p. 206, also p. 210.

70. On these points, see Yavuz, "The Politics of Fear"; E. Burak Arikan, "Turkish Ultra-Nationalists Under Review: A Study of the Nationalist Action Party," *Nations and Nationalism*, Vol. 8, No. 3 (July 2002), pp. 357–75.

71. William Hale, *Turkish Foreign Policy, 1774–2000* (London: Frank Cass, 2002), pp. 204–05; Ziya Öniş, "Globalization, Democratization and the Far Right: Turkey's Nationalist Action Party in Critical Perspective," *Democratization*, Vol. 10, No. 1 (Spring 2003), pp. 27–52.

72. Jenkins, *Political Islam in Turkey*, p. 169.

73. Gunter and Yavuz, "Turkish Paradox," pp. 295–96; Öniş, "Conservative Globalists Versus Defensive Nationalists," p. 257.

choices of allies and enemies. I explore relations with Iran, Israel, and the EU. My primary goal is to test the accuracy of Hypotheses 1 and 2.

## Turkish-Iranian Relations

Turkish-Iranian security relations after the Iranian Revolution in 1979 are in important ways a study in opposites. For most of the 1980s and 1990s, the two states' interactions were marked by recurring periods of hostility. Crises in 1985, from 1988 to 1990, from 1993 to 1994, in 1997, and from 1999 to 2000 were particularly severe.[74] During these times, Turkish policymakers adopted harsh and threatening stances toward Iran, including twice (in 1989 and 1997) forcing Iran to recall its ambassador as a sign of the gravity of the situation. In 1996–97 and after 2002, however, these outcomes were to a great extent reversed, and Turkish and Iranian policymakers significantly improved their relations, including engaging in important security cooperation on a number of issues.

Fluctuations in the degree of ideological differences dividing states' leaders explain these substantial swings in relations. Large ideological distances dividing some Turkish policymakers from their Iranian counterparts translated into very high perceptions of threat, and, as a result, major barriers to sustained cooperation and even frequent crises between the two states. When this ideological gap narrowed after different ideological groups ascended to power in Turkey, threat perceptions lowered and much more cooperative relations ensued.[75]

There is no doubt that the ideological distance dividing the Iranian regime from key ideological groups in Turkey was very large. This was especially true for Kemalists in the military and in the Republican People's and Democratic Left parties. The Islamist government in Tehran was the ideological opposite of Kemalists' understandings of both liberalism and secularism. Although Turkish conservatives in the Motherland and True Path parties subscribed to a less assertive form of state secularism

74. Bülent Aras, "Turkish Foreign Policy Towards Iran: Ideology and Foreign Policy in Flux," *Journal of Third World Studies*," Vol. 18, No. 1 (Spring 2001), pp. 105–24; Robert Olson, *Turkey's Relations with Iran, Syria, Israel and Russia, 1991–2000* (Costa Mesa, CA: Mazda Publishers, 2001), chs. 1 and 2.

75. Turkish-Iranian relations did not significantly improve in response to ideological changes in Iran, namely when Iranian reformers acquired more political power beginning with Mohammad Khatami's electoral victory in May 1997 (most of the crises in Turkish-Iranian relations did, however, occur before this date). Turkish Kemalists were ideological hard-liners toward Iran. Only the repudiation of Islamist principles would have significantly reduced the perceived threat posed by Iran for this ideological group.

than did Kemalists, they, too, rejected the illiberalism of the Islamic Republic, including its theocratic dimension.

The significant ideological differences dividing these Turkish leaders from those in Iran caused the former's threatening and hostile views of the latter. Most important were Kemalists' and conservatives' fears of ideological subversion. There was a long-standing worry among Turkey's policymakers that the Islamist revolution in Iran would spread to Turkey, either by the power of example or because of the deliberate subversive policies of Iranian leaders. Indeed, "the coincidence of the Iranian revolution with the rise in the Islamist radical movements in Turkey made Turkish leaders see them as connected, linking the Iranian government to Islamist radicals in Turkey."[76]

The fear of ideological subversion was not the only cause of hostilities with Iran from Turkey's point of view. Turkish leaders in the 1990s also accused Iran of supporting the militant Marxist Kurdistan Workers' Party, or PKK (a terrorist organization dedicated to Kurdish independence), and viewed Iran as Turkey's main rival in Central Asia and the Balkans. Both of these tensions, though, had important ideological components. Turkish policymakers believed that one reason Iran supported the PKK was to weaken Turkey, thereby making it more susceptible to ideological subversion.[77] Moreover, as we shall see later in the chapter, Turkey's geopolitical competition with Iran in neighboring regions was driven largely by ideological fears, namely the concern that Iran's regime type would spread to other countries unless Turkey was proactive in preventing this outcome.

Turkish Kemalist and conservative leaders frequently and openly accused Iran of trying to subvert Turkey's political system. A book published and distributed in 1985 by the Turkish government led by the Motherland Party asserted that "the Khomeinist groups' [i.e., Islamists in Turkey] fundamental aim is the establishment of a Shari'a state in Turkey. All these activities are supported by Iran . . . aiming to export the Islamic Revolution."[78] In March 1989, Turkey's Constitutional Court ruled that wearing headscarves in universities was illegal. Ayatollah Khomeini denounced the ruling as anti-Islamic, expressed support for those protesting the ban in Turkey, and even threatened economic sanctions against Turkey unless the decision was overturned. Turkey's government (led by the Motherland Party) responded to these threats by warning Iran not to interfere in

76. Unal Gundogan, "Islamist Iran and Turkey, 1979–1989: State Pragmatism and Ideological Influences," *Middle East Review of International Affairs*, Vol. 7, No. 1 (March 2003), p. 9.

77. Olson, *Turkey's Relations with Iran, Syria, Israel and Russia*, p. 34.

78. Quoted in Gundogan, "Islamist Iran and Turkey," p. 9.

Turkey's domestic politics, recalling its ambassador from Tehran, and forcing a replacement of the Iranian ambassador to Ankara.[79]

In 1997, in response to fears of increasing ties between Iran and Turkey's Islamist Welfare Party, the NSC issued a brochure, entitled "Spread of Islamism." The document indicated that Turkey's democratic, secular regime was the key ideological barrier to the spread throughout the Middle East of an increasingly potent Islamic fundamentalism.[80] The same body warned at this time of "Iran's efforts at trying to destabilize Turkey's regime" that must be countered.[81] In May 1999, Prime Minister Ecevit of the Democratic Left Party accused Iran of "continuing its efforts to export its revolution" by trying to destabilize Turkey through increasing support of the PKK.[82] A year later, after evidence surfaced that the Iranian regime was likely behind a series of assassinations in Turkey of leading Turkish secularists, Ecevit stated that "Iran was still trying to export its revolution . . . [F]undamentalist organizations in Turkey have . . . benefited from Iranian hospitality and have exploited for their own benefit Iran's tendency to export its revolution."[83]

As this analysis indicates, both Kemalist and conservative policymakers were highly concerned about the possibility of Iran undermining Turkey's secular republic. Of the post–Cold War crises in Turkish-Iranian relations described above, one (1988 to 1990) occurred when the Motherland Party was in power; another (1993 to 1994) took place during a coalition between the True Path and the Social Democratic Populist Party (the heir to the Republican People's Party after it was banned in 1980); one (1997) was driven primarily by the military, though supported by civilian leaders (especially those of the Motherland Party); and one (1999 to 2000) occurred during a coalition of the Democratic Left, Motherland, and Nationalist Action Parties.

The scholar Bülent Aras (writing in 2001) sums up the widespread fear of subversion among Turkish Kemalists and conservatives and some of the international effects of this worry: "It is almost a truism among Turkish foreign policy decision makers that Iran has long continued a campaign to export Islamic revolution in Turkey by all possible means at its disposal, including support of illegal, 'overt Islamist,' groups. According to this line of reasoning, the peculiarly religious nature of the Iranian regime prevents the reaching of an understanding with Turkey's 'democratic,' secular regime."[84]

79. Gundogan, "Islamist Iran and Turkey," p. 9.

80. Aras, "Turkish Foreign Policy Towards Iran," p. 108.

81. Quoted in Alexander Murinson, *Turkey's Entente with Israel and Azerbaijan: State Identity and Security in the Middle East and Caucasus* (London: Routledge, 2010), p. 49.

82. Quoted in Olson, *Turkey's Relations with Iran, Syria, Israel and Russia*, p. 52.

83. Quoted in Olson, *Turkey's Relations with Iran, Syria, Israel and Russia*, p. 66; see also pp. 59, 64.

84. Aras, "Turkish Foreign Policy Towards Iran," p. 107.

We can be confident that ideological distances and the consequent fears of domestic subversion were responsible for the frequent crises in Turkish-Iranian relations in the 1980s and 1990s not only because key Turkish policymakers repeatedly and explicitly attributed these disputes to ideological concerns, but because not all ideological groups in Turkey shared these fears. Most importantly, leaders of the Islamist Welfare Party not only did not see Iran as a significant threat, but welcomed and worked for high levels of cooperation with this state in order to advance their shared ideological goals. If crises in Turkish-Iranian relations in the decades after the Iranian Revolution were due to some systemic variable other than ideological distance (such as international power distributions or geography), we would not find systematic, major differences in threat perceptions and policy preferences held by different ideological groups from the same country at the same time.

The Welfare Party, led by Necmettin Erbakan, clearly shared core ideological objectives with Iran, including interest in the Islamization of state and society and opposing the perceived deleterious effects of Western culture and influence. Erbakan praised Iran after the fall of the Shah in 1979, stating that "with the revolution, the Iranian people have rescued themselves from being in servitude to American imperialism."[85] Erbakan never lost this admiration. During the election campaign for the 1996 general elections, he made no secret that he "had been and continued to be an ardent supporter and admirer of the Islamic regime in Iran."[86] These views were the opposite of those held by leaders of other Turkish ideological groups, namely Kemalists and conservatives.

After coming to power in June 1996, Erbakan wasted little time in trying to increase cooperation with Turkey's Islamist neighbor. Less than six weeks after assuming office, the new prime minister visited Tehran, which was his first trip to a foreign country. This visit violated the established norm that the first head-of-state trip of a new prime minister should be to a Western country.[87] While in Iran, Erbakan signed an economic agreement and announced a new initiative in defense cooperation. The economic accord was a $23 billion gas supply agreement, which was the largest energy export deal that Iran had ever made. The agreement directly challenged the Clinton administration's efforts to isolate Iran. A week before the Erbakan government agreed to the gas deal with Iran, Clinton

85. Quoted in Gundogan, "Islamist Iran and Turkey," p. 8.

86. Olson, *Turkey's Relations with Iran, Syria, Israel and Russia*, p. 24.

87. Özkeçeci-Taner, *The Role of Ideas in Coalition Government Foreign Policymaking*, pp. 110-111.

had signed into law a bill that called for sanctions on any state that made new investments in Iran's energy infrastructure. The accord with Turkey was just such an investment. The defense agreement committed Turkey and Iran to cooperate to ensure border security and stop Kurdish terrorist activities.[88]

Over the course of his first year in office, Erbakan successfully created with Iran and six other Muslim-majority countries (Bangladesh, Egypt, Indonesia, Malaysia, Nigeria, and Pakistan) a "Muslim Common Market" or "Developing 8" (D-8) group. This union was agreed to on June 15, 1997. Welfare Party leaders hoped the D-8 would be a springboard to increased political and military cooperation among these Muslim-majority states that would eventually rival the EU.[89] The group was central to Erbakan's efforts of orienting Turkey's foreign policies away from the West and toward the Muslim world.

The claim that ideological similarities between the Welfare Party and Iran were critical to increased cooperation between the two states in 1996–97 is corroborated by the fact that Welfare's coalition partner—the True Path Party—remained hostile to the Islamic Republic at the very same time Erbakan was pushing for much better relations with this regime. Significant ideological differences between Turkey's governing parties resulted in opposing foreign policy preferences. According to Binnur Özkeçeci-Taner, True Path Party leaders were "neither ready nor willing to carry out the level of rapprochement the RP [WP] demanded from them, especially with certain Muslim states like Iran and Libya." Foreign Minister Tansu Çiller of the True Path Party tried—unsuccessfully—to persuade Erbakan not to travel to some Muslim countries, including Libya, Sudan, and Nigeria. The True Path Party did not send any deputies on these state visits, and many in this party did not sign Erbakan's trip decrees in parliament. Instead of supporting Erbakan's international choices, TPP leaders were "content with pursuing their own foreign policy priorities. For example, while Erbakan was visiting Muslim countries for the initiation of the Muslim common market . . . Çiller visited Washington D.C. and other Western capitals to signal that Turkey's western orientation was still very much alive. . . . Onur Öymen, the then Under-secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs advised [Western officials] that despite the RP's [WP's] novel initiatives in Turkish foreign policy, it was the statements of

88. On these points, see "Turkey's Troubling Deal With Iran," *New York Times*, August 14, 1996; "Turkey Joins Iran to Purge Kurd Terror," *The Times*, August 13, 1996.

89. Özkeçeci-Taner, *The Role of Ideas in Coalition Government Foreign Policymaking*, pp. 114–116.

Foreign Minister Çiller and other foreign affairs officials represented the official policies of Turkey."[90]

Welfare Party leaders' favorable views toward Iran were more than part of a strategy to change Turkey's foreign policy orientation away from the West and toward the Islamic world. These politicians also hoped that closer relations with Iran would help realize Islamist domestic objectives. The culmination of this process became known as the "Sincan Affair." On the weekend of January 31–February 2, 1997 (which covered the anniversary of the Iranian Revolution), the town of Sincan, which is close to Ankara, staged a "Jerusalem Memorial Night." The purpose of these rallies, which were originally initiated by Ayatollah Khomeini, was to protest Israel's existence.

The mayor of Sincan, who was a Welfare Party supporter, invited the Iranian ambassador to Turkey, Mohammad Reza Bagheri, to speak. The ambassador not only offered a harsh rebuke of Israel and the United States, but challenged the Turkish people "not to be afraid to be called radical." He also implored Turkey to adopt Sharia as the basis of its legal system.[91]

The importance of the Sincan Affair is revealed by how forcefully other Turkish ideological groups reacted in its wake to both the Welfare Party and Iran. Immediately after the this event, Deputy Chief of the General Staff, Çevik Bir, called Iran a "registered terrorist state" that was trying to export "Islamic revolution to Turkey."[92] Turkey's civilian leaders, including President Demirel of the True Path Party and Bülent Ecevit of the Democratic Left Party, warned Iran to stop trying to spread Sharia in Turkey.[93] Shortly after this affair, Turkey's military led the way in expelling Ambassador Bagheri and several other Iranian diplomats (Erbakan tried to prevent this outcome).

Most importantly, the Sincan Affair played a key role in the Welfare Party's ouster, which occurred four months after this event. This party's fall was orchestrated primarily by the military and opposition leaders.[94] Central to

90. Özkeçeci-Taner, *The Role of Ideas in Coalition Government Foreign Policymaking*, p. 114; Binnur Özkeçeci-Taner, "The Role of Ideas in Coalition Foreign Policymaking: Turkey as an Example, 1991–2002" (PhD diss., Syracuse University, 2004), pp. 216–17, 223.

91. Olson, *Turkey's Relations with Iran, Syria, Israel and Russia*, pp. 30–31.

92. Quoted in Gencer Özcan, "The Military and the Making of Foreign Policy in Turkey," in Barry Rubin and Kemal Kirişci, eds., *Turkey in World Politics: An Emerging Multiregional Power* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2001), p. 22.

93. Olson, *Turkey's Relations with Iran, Syria, Israel and Russia*, pp. 31, 37; Aras and Polat, "From Conflict to Cooperation," p. 505, note 15.

94. Future Prime Minister Mesut Yilmaz of the Motherland Party, for example, stated in June 1997 that "Iran is the number one enemy of Turkey." Referring to the D-8 meeting that was to be held in Istanbul in this month, Yilmaz asserted that Erbakan "would use the meeting to shower his Iranian brothers with praises. That is not a matter that should be forgiven: it is a stance that should bring the nation to rebellion." A week later, Erbakan was ousted from office. Quoted in Olson, *Turkey's Relations with Iran, Syria, Israel and Russia*, p. 38.

the change in government were the fears that the Islamist Welfare Party and its ties to Iran were undermining the ideological principles of the Turkish regime. As the scholar of Turkish politics Robert Olson explains, what "most concerned" the Turkish military and its civilian supporters was the "worry that Tehran's aid for the Islamist movements in Turkey [including the Welfare Party] would strengthen and embolden their challenge to the secularist, pro-West, international-capitalist sector of Turkish society."[95] Or, as Aras and Polat express this point, Turkish Kemalists and conservatives after the Sincan affair perceived Iran "as posing an existential threat to the organizing ideology (secularism) of the Turkish state and as attempting to undermine the domestic legitimacy of the secular government . . . A commonly used slogan in political protests in Turkey [was] 'Turkey will never be Iran.'"[96]

As a result of these intense fears of ideological subversion, Turkish Kemalists and conservatives after the Sincan Affair reversed Welfare leaders' international policies and restricted interactions with Iran while moving closer to Western states, including the United States, EU, and Israel.[97] (I examine these latter developments in greater detail in subsequent sections.) Partisan ideological differences among Turkey's key policymakers in this period thus resulted in highly contradictory policies toward Iran even though many other variables—including international power distributions—were constant.

Although major ideological differences dividing many Turkish leaders from their Iranian counterparts resulted in periods of crisis as recently as the late 1990s, in the 2000s there was a significant reduction in Turkish leaders' understandings of the dangers posed by Iran. This development is puzzling for realist arguments, because Iran's relative military capabilities were growing in these years. In 2002, there were a number of revelations about Iran's secret uranium enrichment and heavy-water production facilities that indicated Iranian intentions and progress toward acquiring nuclear weapons (see Chapter 2 for more details). Compounding this danger, in 2004 Iran successfully tested a new version of its Shahab-3 missile, which had a range of 2,000 kilometers. This development placed Turkey within range of a potential Iranian nuclear missile attack.[98]

In response to these major increases in Iranian capabilities, the Turkish government under the leadership of the Justice and Development Party was "surprisingly nonchalant."[99] Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu, for example, asserted in 2009 that his government saw "no threat" from

95. Olson, *Turkey's Relations with Iran, Syria, Israel and Russia*, p. 39.

96. Quoted in Aras and Polat, "From Conflict to Cooperation," p. 505.

97. Aras, "Turkish Foreign Policy Towards Iran," p. 111.

98. William Hale, "Turkey and the Middle East in the 'New Era,'" *Insight Turkey*, Vol. 11, No. 3 (Summer 2009), pp. 154–55.

99. Hale, "Turkey and the Middle East in the 'New Era,'" p. 155.

Iran, and he explicitly stated that he believed that Iran was not a nuclear danger to Turkey.[100] Prime Minister Erdoğan made similar comments.[101] These assertions were not just talk. For much of the JDP's time in office, there was "an unprecedented rapprochement between Turkey and Iran."[102] This rapprochement included a number of high-level official visits between the two states' governments, statements of amicability, and numerous agreements to improve relations in a variety of areas, including the environment, drug trafficking, cultural exchanges, tourism, transportation, and trade. The most noteworthy of the last were several lucrative contracts for the sale and purchase of energy, mainly natural gas and electricity from Iran to Turkey.[103] Turkey and Iran also engaged in important security cooperation after the 2003 war in Iraq. The two countries shared intelligence on Kurdish guerillas operating in northern Iraq and even coordinated military attacks against these groups.[104] In 2010, Turkey was one of two countries in the UN Security Council that voted against the imposition of sanctions on Iran for the continued development of its nuclear weapons program. The sanctions were championed by the United States and the European powers.

What explains this reduction in threat toward Iran from the perspective of Turkish leaders at the same time that Iran's military capabilities were increasing? This outcome is especially puzzling in light of the very high threat levels that existed between the two countries in the 1980s and 1990s. As two experts on Turkish politics express this point, if Iran had "displayed similar ambitions [in the 1990s as it did in the 2000s] to develop elaborate nuclear capabilities, it would have been confronted with much more negative reactions" from Turkey's government. In the 2000s, though, there was "a substantially different attitude toward Iran, even though its nuclear-weapons capability, if developed, [was] likely to pose a much more serious threat" to Turkey.[105]

One development that potentially explains this reversal is a significant increase in shared interests between Turkey and Iran in the 2000s. Turkey's expanding economy required greater access to energy sources, and Iran was

100. Quoted in "Iran: Turkey Dismisses Missile Threat from Iran," *Right Vision News*, December 25, 2009. See also "Turkish Foreign Minister: Iran Not a Threat," Thai Press Reports, November 9, 2009.

101. Mustafa Kibaroglu and Baris Caglar, "Implications of Nuclear Iran for Turkey," *Middle East Policy,* Vol. 15, No. 4 (Winter 2008), p. 65. See also Sabrina Tavernise, "For Turkey, an Embrace of Iran is a Matter of Building Bridges," *New York Times*, June 12, 2010.

102. Kibaroglu and Caglar, "Implications of Nuclear Iran for Turkey," p. 60.

103. "Turkish, Iranian Presidents Want Diplomatic Solution of Iran's Nuclear Issue," BBC Monitoring Europe, August 15, 2008; C. Onur Ant, "Iran, Turkey Fail to Reach Pipeline Deal," Associated Press Worldstream, August 14, 2008.

104. "Turkey and Iran United to Attack Kurdish Rebels," *New York Times*, June 6, 2008.

105. Kibaroglu and Caglar, "Implications of Nuclear Iran for Turkey," pp. 61–62.

a major willing supplier. Moreover, the 2003 Iraq War made an independent Kurdistan a much greater possibility than it had been in the preceding decades. As the threat posed by Kurdish nationalism grew, the incentives for cooperation between Turkey and Iran (both of which possessed large Kurdish populations) against this common danger increased proportionally.

Although common interests clearly played a key role in significantly increasing Turkish-Iranian cooperation in the 2000s, this argument also has major weaknesses. Most importantly, different Turkish ideological groups in the 2000s continued to have very different understandings of the threats posed by Iran. Kemalists in the military and Republican People's Party remained much more hostile to Iran than did JDP leaders. This is not to say that Kemalists had no shared interests with Iran. Indeed, because of these policymakers' particularly strong ideological antipathy to Kurdish nationalism, many from this group confronted powerful incentives to cooperate with Iran against Kurdish separatists in Iraq.

Nevertheless, Kemalists, especially those in the military and security agencies, continued to be highly suspicious of Iranian intentions. In 2005, for example, the chief of the Turkish General Staff, General Hilmi Ozkok, reiterated the military's suspicions of Iranian intentions that had existed since the Iranian Revolution: "Doubts about Iranian efforts to influence the regimes of the surrounding states have disturbed Turkey and have been responsible for the low level of relations between Turkey and Iran."[106] Most importantly, the National Security Policy Document, which is a document that is issued every five years with heavy input from the military and summarizes the strategic dangers to Turkey, continued to list Iran throughout the 2000s as the top threat to Turkey. Iran was deemed a major danger because of its "nuclear ambitions, terrorist activities and fundamentalism."[107] These views were very different than those articulated by key leaders in the JDP, as I detailed above.

JDP politicians' sanguine attitude concerning Iranian intentions both support and challenge my argument. In support of my hypotheses is the fact that there was a clear relationship between shrinkages in the degree of ideological differences dividing Turkish and Iranian leaders and reductions in threat perceptions. JDP leaders' ideological commitment to social Islam and the advancement of Islamic identity and interests in Turkey meant that the ideological gap with Islamist Iran was not as large for JDP politicians as it was for either conservatives in the Motherland and True Path parties or,

106. Quoted in Kibaroglu and Caglar, "Implications of Nuclear Iran for Turkey," p. 65.

107. Murinson, *Turkey's Entente with Israel and Azerbaijan*, p. 186, note 61, also p. 102; Hale and Özbudun, *Islamism, Democracy and Liberalism in Turkey*, p. 141.

especially, Kemalists. The intense religiosity of the JDP, in other words, meant that "Turkey [under JDP leadership] no longer consider[ed] Iran to be an external 'other'" to the extent that Kemalists or even conservatives in the Motherland or True Path parties had.[108] As the ideological distance dividing Turkish leaders from Iran shrank, so did their perceptions of threat, as I detail above.

Key Iranian leaders recognized that the JDP's ascension to power resulted in a reduction in the ideological differences dividing the two states. According, for example, to Ayatollah Mesbah Yazdi (President Ahmadinejad's spiritual advisor), there are three forms of religious rule: a regime in which all of the core aspects of government are based on religion, a government in which all religious orders are observed, and a government of the pious. According to Yazdi, Iran was of the first regime type, Turkey when led by the JDP was of the third. The latter form of government was "considerably different to the absolute rule of laicism and secularism" prescribed by Kemalists, and thus closer ideologically to Iran.[109] As Rahman Bonab (the Director for Arms Control Studies at the Center for Strategic Research in Tehran) summarizes this position, "Iranian policy makers perceive the AKP [JDP] as being friendlier towards Iran's political system, particularly as they regard some Kemalists in Turkey as anti-religious groups."[110]

JDP leaders' optimism with regards to Iranian intentions, however, goes beyond what my argument can explain. Although these politicians' commitment to social Islam resulted in a reduction in the ideological distance dividing this group from their Iranian counterparts, major ideological differences between the two remained. JDP leaders were dedicated to core dimensions of political liberalism, including state secularism (though of the passive variety). Iranian politicians, especially Iranian conservatives, remained adamantly opposed to these beliefs. As incoming Prime Minister Abdullah Gül explained a few days after the 2002 elections, unlike "Iran's regime . . . [The JDP] was a tolerant party, seeking equality and representation of all its citizens; it did not want to restrict the rights of anyone."[111]

Important dimensions of JDP leaders' Iranian foreign policies speak to their recognition of major ideological differences between the two regimes. JDP politicians repeatedly claimed an interest in the domestic liberalization of Iran as a key means of enhancing Turkey's security (this objective,

108. Aras and Polat, "From Conflict to Cooperation," p. 508.

109. "Turkey-Israel Ties to Continue Despite Recent 'Friction,'" BBC Monitoring Middle East, November 9, 2009.

110. Rahman G. Bonab, "Turkey's Emerging Role as a Mediator on Iran's Nuclear Activities," *Insight Turkey*, Vol. 11, No. 3 (Summer 2009), p. 170.

111. Robert Olson, *Turkey-Iran Relations, 1979–2004: Revolution, Ideology, War, Coups, and Geopolitics* (Costa Mesa, CA: Mazda Publishers, 2004), p. 178.

which I discuss more fully in a later section, supports my argument). Foreign Minister Gül, for example, stated in a May 2003 speech at the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) 30th Term Foreign Ministers Meeting in Tehran that Muslim-majority countries, including Iran, "have to act with a fresh and new vision. This should be a vision where better management and transparency prevail, basic rights, freedom and gender equality are regarded as superior values and rude and rhetoric slogans don't have place." Implementing these liberalizing domestic policies, Gül believed, would help avoid "destructive wars" in the region.[112] At the thirty-first session of this conference, held a year later in Istanbul, Gül repeated this theme. He asserted that all members of the OIC, including Iran, should strive for "more democratic, transparent, open societies."[113] JDP leaders repeatedly called for increased transparency and an opening up of Iran's regime as the only way of peacefully resolving the crisis between Iran and Western states over the development of the former's nuclear weapons program.[114] Given the major ideological differences dividing JDP leaders from Iran, differences that were so great that these politicians called for substantial ideological changes in Iran in order to augment Turkey's security, JDP officials should have been more suspicious of Iranian intentions throughout the 2000s than they were.

Ideological content, as opposed to ideological distance, provides the best explanation for these leaders' low perceptions of the Iranian threat. (At the time of this writing, however, there are signs that JDP leaders are becoming much more worried about the potential threat from Iran, and that ideological differences are playing an important role in this change. In September 2011—in what American officials hailed as the most important military cooperation between Washington and Ankara since 2003—Turkey agreed to house a sophisticated early-warning radar system that was part of a new NATO shield against a missile attack. The system is clearly directed at Iran. A key development that apparently increased JDP leaders' fears of Iran was the latter's support of the bloody crackdown on protesters for democracy in Syria in 2011, which followed Iran's crushing of its own pro-democracy demonstrations in 2009. I will say more about JDP leaders' reactions to the

112. Quoted in "Turkish Foreign Minister: Islamic Countries Should Act with Fresh, New Vision," BBC Monitoring Europe, May 28, 2003.

113. Quoted in Philip Robins, "Turkish Foreign Policy Since 2002: Between a 'Post-Islamist' Government and a Kemalist State," *International Affairs*, Vol. 83, No. 1 (2007), p. 302, note 26.

114. "Ankara Concerned over Iran, Calls for Building of Trust," *Turkish Daily News*, February 16, 2006; "Turkey Urges More 'Transparency' over Iran's Nuclear Project, Agence France Presse, February 27, 2006; Utku Cakirozer, "Turkey Adopts New Policy to Warn, Persuade Iran Not to Develop Nuclear Weapons," World News Connection, August 26, 2003.

2011 "Arab Spring" and how these developments increased hostilities between Turkey and key illiberal neighbors, including Iran, below.)[115] JDP politicians' interest in advancing Islamic interests at home created particular foreign policy prescriptions. Specifically, their commitment to social Islam in Turkey helped to create an interest in the protection of Islamic rights in other countries, as well as feelings of solidarity and trust with other Muslim-majority countries.[116] These views applied even to states, like Iran, that were otherwise dedicated to very different domestic-ideological principles. As an expression of these feelings of solidarity and trust, JDP leaders often referred to their counterparts in fellow Muslim-majority countries as "siblings," "brothers," or part of a collective "we."[117] Common religious beliefs thus offset, at least to some degree, the effects of ideological differences at the domestic level, thereby resulting in lower levels of threat than we would otherwise expect. This finding does not support my argument. It is instead closer to Samuel Huntington's clash-of-civilizations argument of intracivilizational (i.e., intrareligious) cooperation.[118]

JDP leaders' policies toward Iran in the 2000s were part of a "neo-Ottoman" strategic doctrine that has become increasingly important to these politicians since coming into power. Core tenets (i.e., the ideological content) of neo-Ottomanism are that Turkey should build on its Ottoman legacy by increasing ties with Middle Eastern states and that Islam should play a prominent role in terms of building a shared sense of identity in the region. It should be stressed, however, that JDP leaders claim that neo-Ottoman foreign policies are designed to complement ties with Western states, not replace them.[119]

115. Thom Shanker, "U.S. Hails Deal with Turkey on Missile Shield," *New York Times*, September 15, 2001.

116. Meliha Benli Altunişik, "Worldviews and Turkish Foreign Policy in the Middle East," *New Perspectives on Turkey*, No. 40 (2009), p. 178; Tarik Oğuzlu, "Middle Easternization of Turkey's Foreign Policy: Does Turkey Disassociate from the West?," *Turkish Studies*, Vol. 9, No. 1 (March 2008), pp. 13–14; Alexander Murinson, "The Strategic Depth Doctrine of Turkish Foreign Policy," *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 42, No. 6 (November 2006), pp. 946, 949, 951; Jenkins, *Political Islam in Turkey*, pp. 216–17.

117. Gareth Jenkins, "Turkey's Latest Crisis," *Survival*, Vol. 50, No. 5 (October–November 2008), p. 8; Meliha Benli Altunişik and Özlem Tür, "From Distant Neighbors to Partners? Changing Syrian-Turkish Relations," *Security Dialogue*, Vol. 37, No. 2 (2006), p. 245; Hüseyin Bağci and Bayram Sinkaya, "The Greater Middle East Initiative and Turkey: The AKP's Perspective," in Nimrod Goren and Amikam Nachmani, eds., *The Importance of Being European Turkey, the EU, and the Middle East* (Jerusalem: The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 2007), p. 165.

118. It is worth emphasizing that JDP leaders' views in this area do not fully support Huntington's argument. At the same time that these politicians advocated Islamic solidarity, they also claimed significant ideological affinity with Western states and lobbied for institutional integration with many of these countries in the EU. I analyze these outcomes below.

119. Ömer Taşpinar, "The Three Strategic Visions of Turkey," U.S.-Europe Analysis Series, No 50 (March 8, 2011), p. 2.

Although ideological distances cannot account for all key aspects of various Turkish leaders' understandings of the threats posed by the Islamic Republic of Iran over the decades, this variable explains many of these outcomes, as I demonstrated above. The effects of ideological distances on Turkey's Iranian policies implicated in critical ways the Turkish-American alliance in the years after the Iranian Revolution. From 1979 to roughly 2002 (except in 1996–97, when the Welfare Party governed), ideologies created significant common interests between Turkish and American policymakers. Most Turkish leaders' ideological hostility toward Iran and the frequent crises with that state created powerful incentives to cooperate with American policymakers, who also viewed Iran as an enemy. Turkey's numerous threats to Iran to stop interfering in Turkey's domestic politics, its close ties with Israel and the EU, and its increased presence in Central Asia and the Balkans after the Cold War (see below for greater details on these topics) were all to an important degree designed to contain Iranian influence and power. These policies received substantial support from U.S. leaders, thereby deepening the Turkish-American alliance in these years.

The JDP's electoral victory in 2002, however, changed how ideologies affected U.S.-Turkish relations on the subject of Iran. JDP leaders disagreed strongly with the George W. Bush administration about how great a threat Iran was to regional security, as well as how to address best this danger (such as it was). JDP leaders viewed Iran as a relatively low threat that should be dealt with by mostly accommodating policies. The Bush administration, in contrast, saw Iran as a major danger that should be coerced and contained by hard-line policies. Thus at the same time that Turkey's leaders were significantly increasing cooperation with Iran in a myriad of areas, the Bush administration was calling for increased economic sanctions and other forms of isolation against Iran. U.S. leaders often pressured their Turkish counterparts to abandon cooperative policies with Iran in favor of more consistently aggressive actions. Frequent failures in these efforts resulted in frustrations and tensions between the two sets of decision makers.[120]

The liberalism of the JDP did, however, create an important area of agreement with America toward Iran during the Bush presidency. Both JDP leaders and U.S. officials were committed to facilitating domestic liberalization in Iran in order to increase their country's security. The problem, which was related to the frictions I discuss in the previous paragraph, was that JDP politicians and Bush administration officials disagreed over the

120. See, for example, "Turkey Rejects U.S. Criticism of Ahmadinejad's Visit," BBC Monitoring Europe, August 9, 2008; "Turkey Said Going Ahead with Gas, Oil Deal with Iran Despite U.S. Sanctions," BBC Monitoring Europe, September 29, 2007; "Burns Visit Deepens the Gap Between Two Allies," *Turkish Daily News*, September 21, 2007.

best means to support this domestic change. American policymakers tended to be what I have labeled ideological hard-liners on this issue and JDP leaders soft-liners.[121] JDP leaders complained that the Bush administration's virtually unmitigated aggressive actions toward Iran had hurt America's and Turkey's interests by weakening Iranian reformers and strengthening ideological conservatives. Turkey's Foreign Minister, Ali Babacan, for example, stated in January 2008 that "simply isolating Iran, in our view, caused Iran to be more united [and weakened] the hands of the reformists."[122]

Despite this disagreement over means, a shared commitment to ideological exportation was an important support to the U.S.-Turkish alliance throughout the 2000s, as I discuss more fully in a later section in this chapter. Turkish-American cooperation toward Iran, in sum, was significantly weaker in the 2000s than in preceding decades because a key ideological foundation of this cooperation—mutual, intense ideological enmity toward the Islamic Republic—had attenuated. Other effects of the JDP's ideology, though, served to stabilize the alliance in other areas.

### Turkish-Israeli Relations

One of the most important developments in Middle Eastern politics in the 1990s was the substantial increase in Turkish-Israeli military and economic cooperation.[123] The centerpieces of this cooperation were a free trade agreement that was signed in March 1996 and ratified in April 1997 and two military agreements that were signed in February and August 1996, respectively. The first of these military accords committed the two states, among other things, to joint military training, exchange of military personnel, visits to one another's military bases, cooperation against terrorist groups, and allowing Israel to conduct electronic surveillance of Syria, Iran, and Iraq from Turkey's territory. The most important aspect of the second accord involved a roughly $600 million deal in which Israel committed itself to help modernize Turkey's F-4 Phantom fighters.[124]

121. On Turkish leaders' ideological soft-line preferences, see Aras, "Turkish Foreign Policy Towards Iran," p. 120; Larrabee and Lesser, *Turkish Foreign Policy in an Age of Uncertainty*, pp. 148–49; "Turkey Says U.S. Nuclear Policy Strengthens Iran," *Turkish Daily News*, January 28, 2008.

122. Quoted in "Turkey Says U.S. Nuclear Policy Strengthens Iran."

123. For details, see Olson, *Turkey's Relations with Iran, Syria, Israel and Russia*, ch. 5; Robins, *Suits and Uniforms*, pp. 260–63; Özkeçeci-Taner, "The Role of Ideas in Coalition Foreign Policymaking," pp. 240–42.

124. Ibid.

Shared geopolitical interests played an important role in the creation of this alliance. From Turkey's perspective, the alliance with Israel helped to put greater pressure on Syria and Iran to stop supporting Islamist groups and the PKK, provided Turkey greater access to the most sophisticated weaponry, and increased ties with the United States via valuable intermediaries in Israeli officials and lobbies in America.

The evolution of Turkish-Israeli relations in the 1990s, however, cannot be adequately understood without taking into account the effects of ideological distances on policymakers' perceptions of both domestic and international threats. The centrality of this variable to Turkish-Israeli cooperation is most clearly revealed by the intense partisan disagreement on this subject: the Islamist Welfare Party was a staunch opponent of close relations with Israel; Motherland and True Path conservatives and especially Kemalists ardently supported and pursued alignment with Israel; and Justice and Development Party leaders were in between these positions (at least until 2010).

The ideological beliefs of Turkish Islamists in the Welfare Party resulted in intense feelings of hostility toward Israel. Members of this party saw Israel as an agent of Western cultural imperialism that was a threat to the rights and interests of Muslims not only in Palestine but throughout the Middle East.[125] Necmettin Erbakan throughout his political career "rejected the Israel-PLO agreements and [seemed] never to have acknowledged Israel's right to exist."[126] In 1980, Erbakan helped to organize the infamous Konya rally during which he "called on Turkey to break with Israel and for all Muslims to 'liberate Jerusalem.'"[127] Throughout the 1995 election campaign, Erbakan vowed to cut ties with Israel. When the military agreements with Israel became public in April 1996, Erbakan and other Welfare leaders promised that when the WP assumed power in June of that year it would terminate these accords and instead increase cooperation with Muslim-majority countries.[128] According to the scholar Yücel Bozdağlioğlu, "Because of [their] Islamic identity, the WP leaders believe[d] that Turkey's national interest [lay] in close relations with other Muslim countries. And for the same reason, Israel constituted the most dangerous threat to the security of other Middle Eastern countries in general, and to that of

125. Hale and Özbudun, *Islamism, Democracy and Liberalism in Turkey*, p. 6.

126. Alan Makovsky, "Israeli-Turkish Relations: A Turkish 'Periphery' Strategy?" in Henri J. Barkey ed., *Reluctant Neighbor: Turkey's Role in the Middle East* (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1996), p. 167.

127. George E. Gruen, "Turkey's Relations with Israel and its Arab Neighbors," *Middle East Review*, Vol. 17, No. 3 (Spring 1985), p. 37.

128. Yücel Bozdağlioğlu, *Turkish Foreign Policy and Turkish Identity: A Constructivist Approach* (New York: Routledge, 2003), pp. 149, 153.

Turkey in particular."[129] Ideological relationships, in sum, determined Welfare leaders' understandings of which states were probable allies and enemies, just as the argument predicts.

Despite the fact that Welfare Party politicians had promised to slow down, if not end, major economic and military cooperation with Israel once they came to power, the WP's electoral victory ultimately resulted in a deepening of the alliance with Israel. This ironic outcome had little to do with changes of heart once the Welfare Party assumed power or with the supposed tendency for geopolitics to trump ideological sentiments once a party is charged with the responsibilities of governing. Welfare leaders' ideological antipathy to Israel and thus their preference for cooling relations with it remained intact during their time in power. Moreover, these politicians were able to damage ties between the two states in some areas. Turkey's ambassador to Israel, Barlas Özener, for example noted in 1997 that "great steps" would have to be taken in Turkish-Israeli military cooperation in order to compensate for the "valuable time lost because of the WP's objections" to aiding and interacting with Israel.[130]

Nevertheless, it remains true that Turkish-Israeli cooperation deepened during Welfare's time in office. Most notably, the August 1996 military accord was signed and the April 1997 free trade agreement was ratified when the WP was in power.

The key reason for this counterintuitive outcome is that the Welfare Party's electoral victory created additional powerful ideological reasons for Turkey's other parties to align with Israel. These other parties, in turn, possessed sufficient domestic power to realize this international objective over Welfare leaders' objections.

Both Kemalist and conservative parties in Turkey confronted ideological incentives to align with Israel before 1996. These incentives included feelings of affinity and perceptions of common enemies that tend to result from shared ideological beliefs. According to one authority on Turkish politics, Philip Robins, "the Turkish foreign policy elite had long viewed Israel as being 'like us.'[131] Elites on both sides shared political values of secularism and democracy, they shared a common identification with Europe and the West, and they shared a common set of threat perceptions, from problematic neighbors to terrorism."[132] The deputy chief of the General Staff, General

129. Bozdağlioğlu, *Turkish Foreign Policy and Turkish Identity*, p. 157.

130. Quoted in Olson, *Turkey's Relations with Iran, Syria, Israel and Russia*, p. 131; also pp. 132, 136, 147–48.

131. This quotation is from a statement made by a senior Turkish diplomat, Ambassador Zeki Kuneralp, who asserted that "the only country in the Middle East, which is 'like us' is Israel" (quoted in Bozdağlioğlu, *Turkish Foreign Policy and Turkish Identity*, p. 152).

132. Robins, *Suits and Uniforms*, p. 251; also Bozdağlioğlu, *Turkish Foreign Policy and Turkish Identity*, pp. 151–53.

Çevik Bir, for example, stressed that it was the "commitment to democracy" that underlay the strategic alignment between Turkey and Israel in the mid-1990s, because it was common democratic principles that gave the two countries shared threats, including Islamic fundamentalism and terrorism. These common dangers created "the need for greater cooperation between Turkey and the region's other democracy, Israel."[133] The claims that Turkey and Israel shared ideological values and that this commonality justified cooperation between the two states were made repeatedly by the Turkish press and policy elites throughout the 1990s.[134] The importance of shared ideologies to Turkish-Israeli alignment is further revealed by the fact other, illiberal Muslim-majority states in the Middle East confronted strong geopolitical incentives to ally with Israel, but none did.[135]

The Welfare Party's ascension to power in 1996 added two other, very powerful, ideological incentives that pushed other Turkish policymakers to move closer to Israel. This initiative was spearheaded primarily by Turkey's Kemalist military leaders, who viewed themselves as the ultimate safeguards of Turkey's secular identity. Turkish conservatives, however (especially those in the Motherland Party), also wanted to increase security cooperation with Israel.[136]

The first benefit for Kemalists and conservatives created by increasing ties with Israel was that these developments weakened the Welfare Party's domestic power. Erbakan had promised to reduce cooperation with Israel. The Turkish military and its civilian supporters believed that by preventing Erbakan from achieving this goal, they would demonstrate the Welfare Party's impotence, thereby likely costing it votes in future elections.[137] Indeed, it "is beyond question . . . that the military's vigorous pursuit of relations with Israel was in part calculated to embarrass a government whose head had called openly for a break in those ties. By forging ever closer links with Israel, the generals 'turned foreign policy into a domestic political football.'"[138]

As part of the efforts to embarrass the WP and reveal its political weakness, Welfare leaders reportedly were not consulted or informed of the content of the defense treaty with Israel that was signed in February 1996.[139]

133. Both quotations from Murinson, *Turkey's Entente with Israel and Azerbaijan*, p. 11.

134. Bozdağlioğlu, *Turkish Foreign Policy and Turkish Identity*, p. 151.

135. F. Gregory Gause III, "Balancing What? Threat Perception and Alliance Choice in the Gulf," *Security Studies*, Vol. 13, No. 2 (Winter 2003/4), p. 303.

136. Olson, *Turkey's Relations with Iran, Syria, Israel and Russia*, pp. 132, 136, 147–48.

137. Many Turkish newspapers made precisely this claim at the time. See Özkeçeci-Taner, "The Role of Ideas in Coalition Foreign Policymaking," p. 246, note 197.

138. M. Hakan Yavuz, "Turkish-Israeli Relations Through the Lens of the Turkish Identity Debate," *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol. 27, No. 1 (Autumn 1997), p. 31; also p. 27.

139. Yavuz, "Turkish-Israeli Relations Through the Lens of the Turkish Identity Debate," pp. 31–32; Özkeçeci-Taner, *The Role of Ideas in Coalition Government Foreign Policymaking*, pp. 126-127; Robins, *Suits and Uniforms*, p. 260.

Despite Erbakan's repeated and severe opposition to the second military accord agreed to with Israel in 1996, the prime minister signed the agreement in August of that year. According to numerous accounts, the main reason he did was "extreme pressure" from the military.[140]

Here we see a clear example of groups using international policies to weaken domestic-ideological threats. During Welfare's time in power, Kemalists labeled Islamic fundamentalism the greatest domestic danger confronting Turkey.[141] Cooperation with Israel helped Turkey address this threat by demonstrating the Islamist Welfare Party's political weakness. Aligning with an ideological ally abroad, in short, helped to weaken an ideological danger at home.

In addition to weakening the Welfare Party's domestic power, a second factor that pushed Kemalists and conservatives to increase cooperation with Israel was to reaffirm the Western orientation of the state's foreign policies. One of Erbakan's preeminent foreign policy objectives was to increase cooperation with Muslim-majority countries at the expense of ties to Western states. Both Kemalists and conservatives were staunchly opposed to this goal. I already discussed how True Path Party leaders, while in a coalition government with the Welfare Party, rejected and tried to undermine this dimension of Erbakan's foreign policies. Kemalists were just as insistent that Turkey's Western-oriented international policies be maintained. Aligning with Israel was an important way of stopping the shift toward the Islamic world and redirecting Turkey's foreign policies toward the West. According to Jonathan Lyons, a senior Reuters reporter writing in May 1997, "the military ties with Israel put an end to any eastward drift that might be imagined under the Erbakan government in Turkey's foreign policy."[142] Or, as the scholar Robert Olson explains, Turkey's "alliance with Israel would demonstrate its continued orientation toward the West . . . [T]he Kemalist elite . . . hoped to demonstrate their commitment to secularism and their strong opposition to Islamic fundamentalism."[143]

The importance of partisan ideological differences to Turkish leaders' perceptions of threat and consequent policies toward Israel continued after the Justice and Development Party's electoral victory in 2002. The JDP's unique ideological principles—which combined commitments to both social Islam and political liberalism and was self-consciously an identity that was "in between" those of Western and Muslim-majority

140. Robins, *Suits and Uniforms*, pp. 262–64, quotation from p. 264.

141. Bozdağlioğlu, *Turkish Foreign Policy and Turkish Identity*, p. 154.

142. Jonathan Lyons, "Growing Turkish-Israeli Ties Bury Islamic Dream," Reuters World Service, May 11, 1997.

143. Olson, *Turkey's Relations with Iran, Syria, Israel and Russia*, p. 151. See also Murinson, *Turkey's Entente with Israel and Azerbaijan*, p. 119.

countries—resulted in relations with Israel in the 2000s that were noticeably less cooperative than those prescribed by Kemalists, yet much more cooperative than advocated by Islamists in the Welfare Party.

There was a noticeable cooling in Turkish-Israeli relations after the JDP came to power. JDP politicians were at times extremely critical of Israeli actions toward Muslims. In 2004, for example, Prime Minister Erdoğan called Israeli policies in the West Bank and Gaza examples of "state terror" against the Palestinian people. In 2006, Erdoğan met with a Hamas leader after this party's victory in Palestinian elections. The prime minister also described Israel's war in Lebanon in 2006 as an illegitimate conflict that exhibited excessive use of force.[144] During the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, in January 2009, Erdoğan walked out of a debate that included Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres. The Turkish prime minister accused Israel of "barbarian" actions in the Gaza strip.[145] Turkish-Israeli relations reached a crisis level in June 2010 after the Israeli military boarded a privately sponsored aid ship that sailed from Turkey and was trying to break Israel's blockade of Gaza. Eight Turkish citizens were killed in the raid. Although Turkish and Israeli officials tried on a number of occasions to heal the damage done to their relationship by this event, their efforts have been unsuccessful. By 2011, the two states were no longer allies, and in some ways they were hostile. In September 2011, Turkey downgraded its diplomatic ties with Israel, expelled Israel's ambassador, and suspended all military agreements with Israel. The Turkish government also made veiled threats against Israel, stating that the Turkish military would escort aid ships to Gaza in order to prevent a repeat of the 2010 attack.[146]

Realpolitik calculations played a role in the weakening of the ties between Turkey and Israel in the 2000s. Iraq's defeat by the United States in the 2003 war, coupled with major reductions in Syrian and Iranian support for the PKK in the early 2000s, meant that the geopolitical incentives for Turkey to align with Israel against common threats had been reduced.

More central to the evolution of Turkish-Israeli relations in the 2000s, however, were the effects of ideological content to JDP leaders' international relations. As explained above, JDP policymakers' commitment to the promotion of Islamic values at home made them much more interested in the protection of Muslims' rights abroad than were Kemalists. A dedication

144. Graham E. Fuller, *The New Turkish Republic: Turkey as a Pivotal State in the Muslim World* (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2008), pp. 75–77; F. Stephen Larrabee, *Turkey as a U.S. Security Partner* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2008), p. 19.

145. Hale, "Turkey and the Middle East in the 'New Era,'" p. 149.

146. Sebnem Arsu and Alan Cowell, "Turkey Expels Israeli Envoy in Dispute over Raid," *New York Times*, September 2, 2011; "Turkey: Navy Will Escort Gaza Flotillas," Reuters, September 8, 2011.

to the advancement of social Islam in Turkey, in other words, led to an interest in Islamic solidarity elsewhere. When JDP leaders believed that Israeli policies threatened Muslims' interests, ties with Israel weakened. As an Azerbaijani diplomat observed, Turkey under JDP leadership distanced itself from Israel because "under Erdoğan . . . the government started to claim that they are Muslims first . . . This obviously puts in question the entente [with Israel] based on the similarity of internal order or 'political model' and common perceptions of external actors such as Iran and Syria."[147]

Although the Turkish-Israeli relationship while the JDP was in office in the 2000s was not as close as it was for most of the preceding decade, it remained much more cooperative (at least until 2010) than had been advocated by Islamists in the Welfare Party in the 1990s. Because of their commitment to political liberalism, JDP leaders did not view Israel as an ideological threat, as Welfare politicians had. In a 2004 speech delivered in the United States, for example, Foreign Minister Gül stated that he wanted to "underscore the importance we attach to our relationship with Israel. Our ties with Israel are traditional, special, and strong. Indeed cooperation between Turkey and Israel, the two democracies in the region, has important implications for the peace and stability of the entire region."[148] Consistent with these claims, JDP leaders' commitment to Israel, despite the criticisms of some Israeli policies, remained strong throughout the 2000s. Negative sentiments toward Israel were invariably followed by extensive efforts by JDP officials to patch up relations.[149] Economic ties between Turkey and Israel remained robust, and Turkey continued to conduct trilateral military exercises with Israel and the United States.[150] Justice and Development Party leaders also publicly stated that anti-Semitism was a crime and that a two-state outcome was the only option to solve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.[151] The JDP government in 2007 invited Israel's president Shimon Peres to address parliament, a rare honor. In 2010, the JDP government voted along with other members of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) to allow Israel to join this body (an unanimous vote was necessary for accession). This was a very important

147. Quoted in Murinson, *Turkey's Entente with Israel and Azerbaijan*, p. 147. See also Ethan Bronner, "Israel and Turkey, Foes and Much Alike," *New York Times*, September 17, 2011.

148. Quoted in George E. Gruen, "Turkey's Strategic Mideast Regional Initiatives," *American Foreign Policy Interests*, Vol. 26 (2004), p. 452.

149. Hale, "Turkey and the Middle East in the 'New Era,'" pp. 149–50.

150. For details, see Fuller, *The New Turkish Republic*, p. 76; Larrabee, *Turkey as a U.S. Security Partner*, p. 20; Gruen, "Turkey's Strategic Mideast Regional Initiatives," pp. 451–52.

151. Omer Celik, "Turkey and the Fate of Political Islam," in Morton Abramowitz, ed., *The United States and Turkey: Allies in Need* (New York: The Century Foundation Press, 2003), pp. 78–79.

issue for the Israelis, and it came in the face of widespread Palestinian opposition.[152] JDP policymakers also worked hard as intermediaries between Israel and its Arab enemies to help arrive at just solutions for all sides. Most notably, Ankara worked for a resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, including counseling moderation to the new Hamas government in 2006; pushed diligently for a cease-fire and resolution of the war in Lebanon; mediated between Israel and Hamas on several occasions; and was critical to bringing Israel and Syria back to the negotiating table in 2008, also mediating the talks once they began.[153]

The preceding findings are similar to one from the previous section that examined the disputes between JDP leaders and Bush administration officials over relations with Iran. The liberal dimension of JDP ideology created a number of important common interests with both Israel and the United States. When these countries, though, took actions that threatened the JDP's support of Islamic interests and solidarity abroad (e.g., Israel's Palestinian policies or the Bush administration's virtually unmitigated hard-line actions toward Iran), important frictions were created that offset, though without eliminating, the shared interests. Unfortunately for the continuation of the Turkish-Israeli alliance, the hostilities created in 2010 by Israel's boarding an aid ship bound for Gaza and the killing of Turkish citizens overwhelmed the common ideological and geopolitical interests that had united the two countries in previous decades. In the future, the more JDP politicians perceive Israel to be violating Palestinian rights, the more crisis-prone their relationship is likely to be.

### Turkish-European Relations

The centrality of partisan ideological differences to Turkish decision makers' perceptions of threat and most important foreign policies also applies to relations with the European Union. The effects of ideological similarities led Kemalists and conservatives to be highly interested in joining the EU (though Kemalists, as we shall see, changed from this position in the 2000s). At the same time, major ideological differences with the EU pushed Islamists and ultranationalists to oppose this outcome.

152. "OECD Members Vote Unanimously to Invite Israel to Join," BBC News, May 10, 2010.

153. For details on these points, see Fuller, *The New Turkish Republic*, p. 75; Ethan Bronner, "Israel and Syria Announce Talks on Peace Treaty," *New York Times*, May 22, 2008; Tulin Daloglu, "Brokering Mideast Peace: Take Turkey as an Example," *Washington Times*, November 20, 2007; Kemal Kirişci, Nathalie Tocci, and Joshua Walker, *A Neighborhood Rediscovered: Turkey's Transatlantic Value in the Middle East* (Washington, DC: The German Marshall Fund of the United States, 2010), pp. 9–10.

Kemalists' intense interest in aligning with Europe and joining its international economic and political institutions had existed since the founding of the Republic. This does not mean that Kemalists never had conflicts with European states. Many Turkish politicians, including Kemalists, resented what appeared to be greater European support for Greece than Turkey in these two states' dispute over Cyprus. The frequent disappointments through the decades with regards to Turkey's bid to become a member of the EU also created widespread anger and disillusionment. Nevertheless, Kemalists' commitment to joining the EU and its predecessor institutions remained strong throughout the twentieth century.

Although common geopolitical interests, most notably fear of the Soviet Union, played a role in the formation of Kemalists' interest in uniting with Europe, members of this ideological group across the decades consistently attributed their alliance preferences to shared ideological beliefs with European countries. Kemalists wanted to create a modern, democratic, secular regime explicitly based on the Western ideological model, and they believed that integrating with Europe would help achieve these domestic objectives. International alignments, in other words, were to a great extent a product of domestic-ideological calculations, as the argument predicts. As Atatürk asserted on October 29, 1923, the day the Turkish Republic was established: "There may be a great many countries in the world, but there is only one civilization [the West], and if a nation is to achieve progress, she must be a part of this one civilization . . . The Ottoman Empire began to decline the day when . . . she cut ties that bound her to the European nations. We will not repeat this mistake."[154] Atatürk's belief that integration with Europe was a key means of facilitating the ideological transformation of Turkey would become a core tenet of Kemalist politicians through the decades. According to Philip Robins, "The strong ideological orientation given to Turkey by Atatürk contained an umbilical link between the Western value system of the Kemalist elite and the external orientation of the state. Kemalism thus provided important parameters within which foreign policy would be framed. The best examples of the ideologically driven nature of Kemalist foreign policy was in its *Westpolitik*," especially attempts to integrate with European institutions.[155]

154. Quoted in Bozdağlioğlu, *Turkish Foreign Policy and Turkish Identity*, p. 51. This view is the opposite of that held by Turkish Islamists. To leaders of this ideological group, "the once-glorious Ottoman Empire began to decline and disintegrate when it started to imitate the West" (Hale and Özbudun, *Islamism, Democracy and Liberalism in Turkey*, p. 6).

155. Robins, *Suits and Uniforms*, pp. 138–39. See also ibid., p. 140; Bozdağlioğlu, *Turkish Foreign Policy and Turkish Identity*, pp. 51–52, 163; Mustafa Aydin, "The Determinants of Turkish Foreign Policy, and Turkey's European Vocation," *The Review of International Affairs*, Vol. 3, No. 2 (Winter 2003), p. 321; Özkeçeci-Taner, "The Role of Ideas in Coalition Foreign Policy-making," pp. 277–78.

Kemalists were particularly interested in using alignment with Europe to advance secularization at home. Indeed, to many Kemalists secularization was the central element of creating a "modern" regime like those found in Europe (France's understanding of state secularism, or laicism, was a particularly important object of emulation for Kemalists).[156] Integrating with states that had successfully achieved political secularization, Kemalists hoped, would help achieve this same outcome in Turkey. Kemalists, in other words, wanted to unite with Europe so that Turkey's "European identity through European membership would suppress Islamic identity."[157]

Turkish conservatives in the Motherland and True Path parties were also firm supporters of joining European institutions, and for reasons analogous to those of Kemalists. Turgut Özal's Motherland Party government applied for full EU membership in April 1987. Özal understood and welcomed the fact that domestic liberalization would be a by-product of this international process. The prime minister explained in 1987 that economic and political reforms in Turkey were "what Europeans want [as a precondition for Turkey joining the EU], so if they want democracy, we establish democracy."[158] Prime Minister Tansu Çiller of the True Path Party similarly argued in 1995 that integration with Europe would "lead to the consolidation of Western values in Turkey. . . . It would reinforce progressive forces in the country. [Joining Europe's institutions] would help Turkey in her efforts to upgrade her democracy, by encouraging attempts at liberalizing the constitutional and legal system."[159] Two years later, President Demirel (also of the True Path Party) claimed that the core reason behind Turkey's bid to join the EU was "a desire to attain the level of contemporary civilization."[160]

I concentrate later in this section primarily on Kemalists' European policies because of the eventual variation of these preferences. As we shall see, Kemalists' dedication to assertive secularism and assimilationist nationalism led many of them in the 2000s to be increasingly hostile to EU membership as they came to believe that Europe threatened, rather than bolstered, their key domestic-ideological interests. This reversal occurred when the leaders of the dominant conservative party in Turkey in these years—the JDP—were staunch advocates of joining the EU.

Unlike Kemalists (until the 2000s) and conservatives, leaders of other prominent ideological groups in Turkey firmly opposed integrating with Europe. In the decade following the end of the Cold War, there were two

156. Hurd, *The Politics of Secularism in International Relations*, p. 66.

157. Yavuz, *Secularism and Muslim Democracy in Turkey*, p. 217.

158. Quoted in Bozdağlioğlu, *Turkish Foreign Policy and Turkish Identity*, pp. 76–77.

159. Quoted in Özkeçeci-Taner, *The Role of Ideas in Coalition Government Foreign Policymaking*, p. 97.

160. Quoted in Bozdağlioğlu, *Turkish Foreign Policy and Turkish Identity*, p. 82.

such groups: Islamists in the Welfare Party and ultranationalists in the Nationalist Action Party. Large ideological differences between both Turkish Islamists and right-wing nationalists in relation to European countries pushed these politicians to view the EU as both subversive of their domestic-ideological objectives and as major threats to Turkey's interests.

The ideological differences dividing Welfare Party politicians from European states were substantial. To Welfare Party leaders, the EU was a Christian club that was dedicated to political and social values of secularization, individualism, and materialism, all of which were at odds with Muslim countries' core ideological beliefs (as Welfare leaders defined these principles).[161] Turkish Islamists feared both ideological subversion by Western principles and the international intentions of European states, just as Hypothesis 1 predicts. Erbakan declared that "to become a member in the EU by leaving the Community of Muslim countries . . . means to lose the very essence of our identity."[162] At another time, the future prime minister described Turkey's application for EU membership as "treason against our history, concept of civilisation, culture, and most important of all, our independence."[163] Welfare Party member Hasan Dikici similarly asserted in a 1993 speech to the Turkish Grand National Assembly that "the EU is an integration model based on a Christian-Western culture [and] . . . Christian ideology. Turkey is a Muslim country . . . [To] try to have a place in the European Union means to abandon our political, social, and cultural values."[164] These fears were not unreasonable. Kemalists, for example, wanted to integrate with Europe to help achieve precisely the goals—especially secularization—that WP politicians opposed.

On the international front, Welfare Party leaders believed that the European powers were using prospective membership for Turkey in the EU and related institutions to reestablish their imperial position in the Middle East. One of Erbakan's leading lieutenants, Oğuzhan Asiltürk, bluntly put this point when he stated that "joining the [European] Customs Union would be the equivalent of becoming a colony of Europe."[165] Erbakan similarly asserted that joining the Common Market would make Turkey "a colony and a servant of the West."[166] Welfare politicians claimed that membership

161. Fuller, *The New Turkish Republic*, p. 42; Hale, *Turkish Foreign Policy*, pp. 238–39; Yildiz, "Politico-Religious Discourse of Political Islam in Turkey," pp. 191–92, 206; İhsan D. Dağı, "Transformation of Islamic Political Identity in Turkey: Rethinking the West and Westernization," *Turkish Studies*, Vol. 6, No. 1 (March 2005), pp. 23–24.

162. Quoted in Bozdağlioğlu, *Turkish Foreign Policy and Turkish Identity*, p. 133.

163. Quoted in Hale and Özbudun, *Islamism, Democracy and Liberalism in Turkey*, p. 6.

164. Quoted in Bozdağlioğlu, *Turkish Foreign Policy and Turkish Identity*, pp. 132–33; see also pp. 54, 94–5.

165. Quoted in Robins, *Suits and Uniforms*, p. 147, Robins' paraphrase.

166. Quoted in Bozdağlioğlu, *Turkish Foreign Policy and Turkish Identity*, p. 74.

in the EU would allow the European powers to exploit Turkey's labor and other resources while preventing Turkey from becoming a leader of the Muslim world.[167] To Erbakan, joining the EU would be tantamount to accepting a "Second Sevres."[168]

Welfare Party leaders advocated foreign policies that were the opposite of Kemalists' and conservatives' efforts to join the EU. Instead of becoming or remaining members of Western institutions, Erbakan in the 1990s called for the creation of a "new Muslim world order." This new order was to consist of an Islamic United Nations, an Islamic equivalent of NATO,[169] an Islamic equivalent of UNICEF, a common Islamic currency, and an Islamic Common Market. The creation of the D-8 ("Developing 8"—see above) when Erbakan was prime minister was therefore only one component of an "Islamic Union" that the WP hoped ultimately to create to rival the West.[170]

Welfare politicians were clear that their ideological differences with Turkey's other parties were the key cause of the groups' polar opposite international objectives. As soon as the Welfare Party's beliefs triumphed over those of its competitors, radically different foreign policies would result. The scholar Reşat Kasaba sums up Turkish Islamists' position: "[O]nce the restrictive cloak of Kemalist ideology is removed, Turks will rejoin the Islamic world" and turn its back on the pro-EU policies "created by the Kemalist elite after the Western image."[171] According to İhsan Dağı, for Turkish Islamists "it was westernization policies [in Turkey] that resulted in the abandonment of the Islamic world and laid the ground for Turkey to be an all-season ally of the West."[172]

Turkey's ultranationalists in the Nationalist Action Party were also highly critical of the EU, and consistently opposed the domestic policies necessary for Turkey to join it. According to the scholars Nergis Canefe and Tanil Bora, the NAP in the 2000s (i.e., after the dissolution of the Welfare Party) was the "prime protagonist of anti-European attitudes and discourse . . . The MHP [NAP] and its leaders indeed appear to be the only group that oppose

167. Bozdağlioğlu, *Turkish Foreign Policy and Turkish Identity*, p. 73.

168. Quoted in Bozdağlioğlu, *Turkish Foreign Policy and Turkish Identity*, p. 133. The Treaty of Sèvres was drawn up in 1920 by the victorious powers of the First World War. It divided the Ottoman Empire into small states and occupation zones. The treaty symbolizes some Turks' lasting fears that foreign powers are conspiring to weaken and divide Turkey.

169. Erbakan advocated that Turkey pull out of the "Western" NATO (Fuller, *The New Turkish Republic*, p. 42).

170. On the preceding, see Robins, *Suits and Uniforms*, pp. 146–47.

171. Reşat Kasaba, "Kemalist Certainties and Modern Ambiguities," in Reşat Kasaba and Sibel Bozdoğan, eds., *Rethinking Modernity and National Identity in Turkey* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1997), p. 17.

172. Dağı, "Transformation of Islamic Political Identity in Turkey," p. 25.

Turkish efforts to fulfill the legal criteria regarding full membership in the European Union."[173]

Nationalist Action Party members' primary ideological objective was to advance Turkish "culture" by preserving a powerful Turkish state and a strong communitarian ethos among its people. Joining the EU, NAP leaders believed, did little to advance these goals and much to damage them. In the first place, because there were relatively few ethnic Turks outside of Turkey in Europe, there was little ideological affinity for EU countries from NAP politicians' point of view. In fact, their xenophobia tended to result in the opposite outcome: mistrust of all non-Turkic groups, including the European powers.[174]

NAP leaders' fears of ideological subversion created by integrating with Europe were also very high. They believed that the economic integration that accompanied membership in both the Customs and European Unions would spread to Turkey norms of individualism and materialism at the expense of communitarian, self-sacrificing values. Most importantly, they believed that the political changes the EU demanded of Turkey before it could become a member—especially those that protected individual rights at the expense of state power and/or advanced the rights of cultural and ethnic minorities (e.g., the Kurds)—systematically weakened Turkey's government and empowered rival ethnic groups within the country. The EU's insistence on major liberalizing changes in Turkey thus fueled NAP politicians' suspicions that the West was determined to keep Turkey weak and divided in order to help assert its dominance in the region.[175]

The preceding analysis of different ideological groups' policies toward the EU applies until the early 2000s. In that decade, there was a dramatic shift in international preferences. Throughout their time in office, the leaders of the Justice and Development Party—despite their group's Islamist roots and their continued commitment to the promotion of social Islam—were forceful advocates for EU membership. Conversely, Kemalists in the military and opposition Republican People's Party largely abandoned their decades-long support of integration into Europe and became "Euro-skeptics" if not outright critics of joining the EU. The effects of ideological distances and threats to policymakers' domestic-ideological interests explain these outcomes.

173. Nergis Canefe and Tanil Bora, "Intellectual Roots of Anti-European Sentiments in Turkish Politics: The Case of Radical Turkish Nationalism," in Ali Çarkoğlu and Barry M. Rubin, eds., *Turkey and the European Union: Domestic Politics, Economic Integration and International Dynamics* (London: Frank Cass, 2003), p. 120.

174. Özkeçeci-Taner, *The Role of Ideas in Coalition Government Foreign Policymaking*, pp. 46–50.

175. On these points, see Yavuz, "The Politics of Fear," pp. 211, 217–18; Öniş, "Globalization, Democratization and the Far Right," pp. 36, 44; Bozdağlioğlu, *Turkish Foreign Policy and Turkish Identity*, pp. 73–74; 94–95.

JDP leaders' core ideological beliefs pushed these politicians to be highly committed to joining the EU. They repeatedly claimed that because they shared the same liberal values as Western European states, institutional integration with the EU was the natural outcome. Common principles, in short, resulted in low threat perceptions and thus powerful incentives for alignment, as Hypotheses 1 and 2 predict. As Prime Minister Gül wrote in 2003: "Turkey is part of the Western world. We share the same value system . . . My government is eager to prove that Muslim society can be democratic, open, transparent, pluralistic and modern, while preserving its identity . . . [T]ogether [Turkey within the EU] will prove that a clash of civilizations is not inevitable."[176] Or as then President Gül explained in 2008: "Fundamental principles of the EU are based on democracy, supremacy of law, protection of human rights, recognition of social rights, free market economy, cultural diversity and respect. [These] values . . . are in conformity with the philosophy of our Republic and expectations of our people. Thus, this project [of joining the EU] should be one of the most important priorities of our diplomacy."[177] Prime Minister Erdoğan described the EU as his party's "obsession," and said that Turkey's joining this body would be "the biggest democratization project [in Turkey] after the proclamation of the Republic."[178] At another time, the prime minister called the EU "the best tool for [the development of] a modern, secular, democratic and prosperous Turkey."[179]

JDP leaders' actions supported their rhetoric. As I detailed in the chapter's first section, JDP governments in the 2000s passed a great amount of liberalizing legislation and constitutional changes, many of which were explicitly designed to bring Turkey's domestic politics in line with EU requirements for accession.

JDP politicians were committed to joining the EU not only for reasons of ideological affinity but to acquire leverage to advance their particular domestic agenda at the expense of Kemalists' preferences. Alliance with an ideological ally abroad, in short, would help to defeat an ideological rival at home. Key outcomes that the EU required of Turkey for accession—namely increased political, religious, and cultural liberties and reduced domestic influence by the military[180]—were precisely the domestic goals that JDP leaders wanted to

176. Abdullah Gül, "Turkey's Vision for the Transatlantic Partnership," *The National Interest*, June 18, 2003.

177. Quoted in "Turkish President Tells Envoys EU Membership Remains a Top Priority," BBC Monitoring Europe, July 19, 2008.

178. Quoted in Yavuz, *Secularism and Muslim Democracy in Turkey*, p. 202.

179. Quoted in "Premier Tells Assembly: EU Best Tool for Democratic, Secular Turkey," BBC Monitoring International Reports, May 29, 2003.

180. For details, see Aras and Polat, "From Conflict to Cooperation," p. 501; Gunter and Yavuz, "Turkish Paradox," p. 294; Dağı, "Transformation of Islamic Political Identity in Turkey," p. 32.

achieve. To put this analysis another way, JDP politicians believed that joining the EU would boost *both* dimensions of their ideology: political liberalism and social Islam. These goals were in fact interconnected. The more domestically liberal Turkey was (political liberalism), the more religious freedoms would be protected (social Islam). Reducing the domestic power of the military would further facilitate the realization of these objectives. The EU thus required not only that Turkey implement the very domestic goals that were dearest to the JDP, thereby advancing the party's ideological agenda, but that the power of the domestic group that was most likely to oppose these objectives—Kemalists in the military—be curtailed. Given this synergy, it is no wonder that joining the EU was the JDP's "obsession."

The same logic that accounts for JDP leaders' interest in joining the EU also explains why Kemalists in the 2000s became opponents of this outcome. As I explained above, a major reason why Kemalists throughout the twentieth century wanted to integrate with Europe was because members of this ideological group believed that this outcome would advance key domestic goals. In the 2000s, however, this thinking was reversed. Many Kemalist leaders in this decade came to believe for the first time that joining the EU *would subvert rather than support Kemalists' ideological objectives.* Specifically, the EU's increasing emphasis in the 2000s on religious freedoms and multiculturalism that augmented minority groups' linguistic and cultural rights in Turkey directly endangered two of the lynchpins of Kemalist ideology: assertive secularism and assimilationist nationalism.[181] The EU, as a result of these developments, became a major ideological threat to Kemalism. Thus, for example, the Republican People's Party's 2007 election manifesto questioned Turkey's negotiations with the EU because party leaders had come to believe "that it would be impossible to maintain a Kemalist state if Turkey joined the EU."[182] The scholar of Turkish politics Henri Barkey describes Kemalists' increasing hostility to the EU, as well as

181. For example, Olli Rehn, the EU Commissioner for Enlargement, asserted in 2008 that Ankara needs to improve the access of its Kurdish population to radio and television broadcasting and "to support the teaching of languages other than Turkish" (quoted in "EU Enlargement Chief Urges Turkey to Promote Cultural Rights, Reduce Poverty of Kurds," Associated Press Wire, March 3, 2008). See also Gunter and Yavuz, "Turkish Paradox," p. 294; Aras and Polat, "From Conflict to Cooperation," p. 499; Karabelias, "The Military Institution, Atatürk's Principles, and Turkey's Sisyphean Quest for Democracy," p. 63.

182. Gunter and Yavuz, "Turkish Paradox," p. 295. See also: Öniş, "Conservative Globalists Versus Defensive Nationalists," pp. 250–51; Seçkin Barış Gülmez, "The EU Policy of the Republican People's Party: An Inquiry on the Opposition Party and Euro-Skepticism in Turkey," *Turkish Studies*, Vol. 9, No. 3 (September 2008), p. 432; Emel Akçali and Mehmet Perinçek, "Kemalist Eurasianism: An Emerging Geopolitical Discourse in Turkey," *Geopolitics*, Vol. 14, No. 3 (August 2009), p. 556; Ciddi, *Kemalism in Turkish Politics*, pp. 97–99; Dağı, "Transformation of Islamic Political Identity in Turkey," pp. 32–33.

the ideological foundations of this hostility, as follows (writing in 2008): "[To Kemalists the EU process was at this time] a recipe for hastening the dissolution of the Turkish state . . . As recently as August 2008, both the incoming Chief of the Turkish General Staff, General Ilker Basbug, and the new commander of the Land Forces, Isik Kosaner, issued warnings against the EU and levelled blistering attacks on Turkish non-governmental organisations that get help from Europe and the United States because, in their view, they threaten the secularist principles and unity of the state."[183] By threatening the preservation of Kemalists' understanding of secularism and nationalism, European actions damaged critical ideological ties that had historically linked Kemalists to the West.

The more Kemalists viewed the EU as a threat to their domestic-ideological objectives, the more their international alignment preferences moved away from the EU, and, as we shall see, from the United States. According to Emel Akçali and Mehmet Perinçek (writing in 2009), Kemalists in the 2000s became increasingly "Eurasianist" in their geopolitical preferences: "Kemalist Eurasianists [are defined by] their opposition to decentralised government structures and neo-liberalism in political economy, since they view these policies as postmodern strategies promoted by the West with the objective of disintegrating, weakening, and even eliminating nation-states like Turkey." Turkish Eurasianists called for alliances with China, Russia, and India, all of which Kemalists praised for their resistance to Western dominance.[184] As Kemalists became more nationalistic in terms of their domestic politics, they also increasingly aligned with the anti-Western international policies of the right-wing Nationalist Action Party, the latter of which I described above.[185] Both groups of Euro-skeptics felt that "European integration and its associated conditionality will tend to undermine the unity and the secular nature of the Turkish state."[186] Ideological calculations were thus not only instrumental in determining the threat perceptions and alliance policies of Kemalists, conservatives, Islamists, and ultranationalists, but in turning long-time supporters of Turkey's joining the EU into critics.

183. Henri J. Barkey, "The Effect of US Policy in the Middle East on EU-Turkey Relations," *The International Spectator*, Vol. 43, Issue 4 (December 2008), p. 5 (online pagination), available at http://cas.lehigh.edu/CASWeb/resource.aspx?id=929 (accessed November 15, 2011). Some Kemalists remained interested in joining the EU if no domestic reforms that threatened their understandings of secularism and nationalism were required as part of the accession process. Since this outcome was extremely unlikely, by this point they were in reality opponents to integrating with European institutions. See Öniş, "Conservative Globalists Versus Defensive Nationalists," pp. 247, 250.

184. Akçali and Perinçek, "Kemalist Eurasianism," pp. 562–63.

185. Gunter and Yavuz, "Turkish Paradox," p. 296.

186. Öniş, "Contesting for Turkey's Political 'Centre,'" p. 368; also pp. 369, 375 (note 19).

## IDEOLOGY AND TURKISH-U.S. COOPERATION

The primary goal of the previous sections was to demonstrate the importance of ideological distances to Turkish leaders' perceptions of threat and consequent foreign policies in a critical area of international security: choices of allies and enemies. These findings clearly affected Turkish-American relations. Throughout the 1990s, the ideological objectives of Turkish Kemalists and conservatives led them to have the same allies (Israel and the EU) and enemies (Iran) as the United States. Ideological variables were, as a result, a potent source of cooperation between Turkey and America in these years. This claim is supported by the facts that U.S. leaders worked hard to help Turkey join the EU, increase military and economic cooperation with Israel, and contain Iran.

Mutual enemies and allies were, however, only one of the common interests that shared ideological beliefs helped to create between Turkish and American policymakers. Many Turkish and American leaders also shared an interest in spreading liberal values and institutions in the Middle East and adjacent regions as a means of bolstering their states' security. This common interest provided a major boost to the Turkish-American alliance in the years after the Cold War's end.

In the 2000s, however, U.S.-Turkish relations suffered two major setbacks. First, many Kemalists in this decade came to view the United States—just as they did the EU—as a threat instead of a support to their domestic-ideological interests. The result was increasingly hostile views of America. Second, the Justice and Development Party's commitments to social Islam and Islamic solidarity led to increasing frictions with the United States due to the latter's hostile relations with a number of Muslim-majority countries, especially Iran and Syria. Despite these developments, Turkish and U.S. policymakers continued to share a number of major important interests in these years, and ideological variables were at the heart of many of them.

### Turkey as an Ideological "Model" for the Spread of Democracy in the Post–Cold War World

The end of the Cold War obviously removed a major ideological and geopolitical threat to Turkish and American interests. This did not mean, though, that common security challenges to the two countries had been eliminated. Indeed, the withdrawal of Soviet and then Russian power from Central Asia and the Balkans in the early 1990s created its own set of challenges. Many Western leaders, including those in Turkey and the United

States, assumed that the Muslim populations in these regions in the post–Cold War era would gravitate toward one of two sets of ideological beliefs, political liberalism or Islamic fundamentalism based on the Iranian model. Western leaders believed that their states' security would be affected in vastly different ways depending on which of these two ideologies dominated. If liberalism, the West's influence would increase in strategically vital areas that were previously under Soviet domination. If Islamic fundamentalism, then the regions would continue to be under hostile states' control. As the scholar Idris Bal explains: "The West worried about the possibility [of] Central Asian states joining the Iran-Algeria group, because if radical Islam was adopted by the newly independent states in the Caucasus and Central Asia, the region could pose a threat to the West because of its geographical position and natural resources. Therefore, the Muslim states of the former Soviet Union were to be discouraged from adopting the 'Iranian Islamic model' . . . It was assumed that if the Muslim states of the former USSR adopted Islamic-oriented governments, this would automatically lead to anti-Americanism and anti-Westernism."[187]

Nearly identical fears were at work for Turkey and its Western allies during the war in Bosnia. According to Philip Robins, "Ankara feared that the lack of political and military success [for the secular Bosnian government during the war] might result in the discrediting of secularism and moderation. Turkish officials long worried about the fall of the secular administration in Sarajevo and the Islamisation of Bosnian politics. In the autumn of 1993, with the devaluation of inter-confessional ties and the growing importance of the Muslim assembly in Bosnia, some of Turkey's worst fears looked as if they might soon be realised. Moreover, Iran, Turkey's . . . rival in the former Soviet south, was also gaining influence in Bosnia . . . With the movement of political Islam growing in the Arab World and as apparently entrenched as ever in Iran, for Turkey the erosion of the position of its secular Muslim friends was a disturbing sight."[188]

In this ideological battle with Islamic fundamentalism, both Turkish and American leaders believed that Turkey was uniquely positioned to help spread liberal ideas and institutions.[189] Turkey was a Muslim-majority country that was committed to secularism, democracy, and free markets. This combination gave Turkey unrivaled leverage for the exportation of liberalism to other Muslim-majority states. President Özal, for example,

187. Bal, *Turkey's Relations with the West and the Turkic Republics*, p. 111. See also pp. 78, 107, 110–12, 115, 198–99, 203.

188. Robins, *Suits and Uniforms*, p. 352.

189. Israeli leaders believed the same thing, which solidified cooperation with Turkey in the 1990s. Murinson, *Turkey's Entente with Israel and Azerbaijan*, p. 107.

asserted in 1991 that Turkey's regime type is "a good example for the rest of the Islamic world . . . Our experience with economic reform in the past 10 to 11 years . . . and also our experience in the past 45 of democracy" would allow Turkey to become an ideological inspiration for others.[190] A year later Prime Minister Demirel of the True Path Party declared that "Turkey is committed to being a model [for former Soviet Republics] of democracy, rule of law, tolerance, respect for human rights and economic liberties." In 1993, Demirel stated that "in Central Asia we are the emissaries of Europe. We are the Europeans who are taking European values to Central Asia."[191] Tansu Çiller made similar statements after she became Prime Minister in 1993.[192] Çiller often told U.S. and other Western politicians that there were "essentially two models in the Islamic world: Turkey and Iran," and that it was a major interest for Western states to support Turkey in this ideological struggle.[193]

In 1999, Demirel—who was then Turkey's president—gave one of the most definitive statements expressing the belief not only that Turkey should be an ideological model for the spread of democracy, but that this outcome would enhance the security of both Turkey and its Western allies: "Turkey's strategic relevance in the post–Cold War era lies in her very ability to look both to the West and East . . . [while remaining] firmly committed to her western orientation . . . By her very existence Turkey can be a model for her neighbors to plant the seeds of secular democracy. Through her actions fostering economic and political interdependence and cooperation, Turkey will not only remain central to the security and prosperity of the West, but will also be the key state in the containment and resolution of a host of problems in our era."[194]

Turkish policymakers' commitment to ideological socialization was much more than talk. In the early 1990s, its leaders—with support and encouragement from the United States—dedicated substantial aid to help the Turkic republics in South Asia evolve from dictatorships to multiparty democracies and from centralized to free-market economies. Turkish politicians sent political and economic experts to advise the republics and

190. Quoted in David Aikman, "Hoping Saddam Hussein Would Just Go Away," *Time*, May 13, 1991.

191. Both Demirel quotations are from Bal, *Turkey's Relations with the West and the Turkic Republics*, pp. 81, 52 respectively.

192. Bal, *Turkey's Relations with the West and the Turkic Republics*, p. 59.

193. Yalim Eralp, "An Insider's View of Turkey's Foreign Policy and Its American Connection," in Abramowitz, ed., *The United States and Turkey*, p. 116.

194. Quoted in Hasan Ulusoy, *One Policy, Many Identities: The Consistency of Turkey's Foreign Policy with Special Emphasis on its Security Dimension in the Post-Cold War Era* (Istanbul: The ISIS Press, 2007), p. 116.

established a new governmental agency in Turkey dedicated to facilitating political and economic liberalism in these states. Turkey's government offered billions of dollars in loans and export credits to these countries and encouraged private Turkish companies to invest and trade in the region. Turkey also established educational exchanges with the Turkic republics and opened schools there. Finally, the government sent Qurans and other religious books as well as religious experts to teach a moderate form of Islam in an attempt to counter the fundamentalist proselytizing being made by Iran.[195]

In the Balkans, Turkish policymakers pushed hard for multilateral military interventions in Bosnia in the early 1990s under either UN or NATO coordination. One of the main arguments that politicians used to convince both their fellow citizens and foreign leaders to intervene in this conflict was that if they did not intervene to help protect and spread secular, democratic values, Islamic fundamentalism and Iranian power would grow.[196] Turkey's military ultimately played an extensive role in peacekeeping not only in the Bosnian War but in the conflict in Kosovo as well.

American decision makers supported Turkish leaders' policies of regime promotion.[197] President George H. W. Bush in February 1992 pointed to Turkey as "the model of a democratic, secular state . . . In a region of changing tides, Turkey endures as a beacon of stability." Secretary of State James Baker offered similar praise.[198] In a November 1999 speech to Turkey's Grand National Assembly, President Clinton called Turkey an "example" that could "inspire" in its neighbors "prosperity and declining conflict," "tolerance," and "growing respect for human rights."[199]

By creating a common interest in regime exportation, shared ideological principles between Turkish and American leaders played a key role in solidifying the alliance between the two countries in the 1990s despite the absence of the Soviet threat. So great was Turkey's cooperation with the United States in the early 1990s in the Balkans, Central Asia, and the Middle East that in February 1991 the Bush administration labeled the U.S.-Turkish alliance as one of "enhanced partnership."[200] In 1999, largely

195. For details on these points, see Bal, *Turkey's Relations with the West and the Turkic Republics*, pp. 82–90.

196. Özkeçeci-Taner, *The Role of Ideas in Coalition Government Foreign Policymaking*, p. 87; Hale, *Turkish Foreign Policy*, p. 262.

197. Bal, *Turkey's Relations with the West and the Turkic Republics*, pp. 107, 110, 112.

198. Quoted in Bal, *Turkey's Relations with the West and the Turkic Republics*, p. 115.

199. The White House, Office of the Press Secretary, "Remarks by the President in Address to the Turkish Grand National Assembly," November 15, 1999.

200. Quoted in Ilhan Uzgel, "The Balkans: Turkey's Stabilizing Role," in Rubin and Kirişci, eds., *Turkey in World Politics*, p. 50.

due to Turkey's continued support of America's Middle Eastern and Balkan policies, Clinton administration officials described the alliance as a "strategic partnership."[201]

### New Frictions and Areas of Cooperation in the 2000s

Relations between Turkey and the United States suffered major setbacks in the new century. Leaders of the main ideological groups in Turkey after 2003—including Kemalists in both the military and opposition Republican People's Party, as well as conservatives in the governing JDP—made actions and statements that both resulted in and reflected a clear deterioration in the Turkish-American alliance.

The precipitating cause of many of these frictions was America's decision to invade Iraq in 2003. Probably the low point in Turkish-American relations occurred in March 2003 when Turkey's parliament, in a very close vote, failed to pass a resolution that would have allowed approximately 62,000 U.S. troops to use Turkish territories to attack Iraq from the North.[202]

The recriminations over the failed vote to aid the United States in Iraq marked the beginning of significant tensions in U.S.-Turkish relations in a number of areas. In July 2003, U.S. troops detained eleven Turkish special force members who were suspected of planning to assassinate a local Kurdish politician. The soldiers were released within two days, but not before being taken away with sacks over their heads for interrogation. America's detainment of these soldiers shocked and angered the Turkish government, military, and public. Turkish officials also frequently complained after the war in Iraq began that America was not doing enough to prevent either the creation of an autonomous Kurdish region in northern Iraq or, more alarmingly, the resurgence of the PKK in this region.[203] For their part, American leaders believed that Turkey was undermining critical U.S. interests in the Middle East by adopting more accommodating policies toward Iran, as I discussed above.

201. Aylin Güney, "An Anatomy of the Transformation of the U.S.-Turkish Alliance: From 'Cold War' to 'War on Iraq,'" *Turkish Studies*, Vol. 6, No. 3 (September 2005), p. 346. The solidification of the Turkish-American alliance in the 1990s was not due solely to a shared interest in ideological exportation, though this was a prominent factor in this development. Cooperation against Iraq in the 1991 Gulf War and the subsequent containment of this state was another key factor that benefited the alliance.

202. Philip Robins, "Confusion at Home, Confusion Abroad: Turkey Between Copenhagen and Iraq," *International Affairs*, Vol. 79, No. 3 (2003), p. 564.

203. On the preceding points, see Kibaroglu and Caglar, "Implications of Nuclear Iran for Turkey," pp. 62–63; Taşpinar, "Turkey's Middle East Policies," p. 19.

Although reactions to American policies, especially those associated with the Iraq war, may have triggered major frictions in U.S.-Turkish relations, ideologies were a foundational source of many of these tensions. In other words, Turkish leaders—especially Kemalists and JDP politicians—perceived American actions to be threatening to a large extent because of the effects of their ideological beliefs.

Although Kemalists would eventually become fierce critics of America's "war on terrorism," many members of this ideological group in the military and Republican People's and Democratic Left parties originally supported the Bush administration's reaction to the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks. The U.S.-led war against al Qaeda and the Taliban in Afghanistan meshed with Kemalists' ongoing hostility to Islamic fundamentalism and terrorism.[204] Many Kemalists also viewed the aftermath of 9/11 as a means of enhancing Turkey's value to the United States. These individuals believed that the strict secularism of the Turkish regime would make Turkey an especially valuable ally in a conflict with Islamic radicalism. According, for example, to a 2002 document that expressed the Turkish military's official assessment of U.S.-Turkish relations after 9/11, this body viewed "September 11 as an opportunity to enhance Turkey's importance in the eyes of American decision makers." The document claimed that Turkey's "secular" identity would help the United States defeat the two states' common ideological foe: Islamic radicalism.[205]

Given these views, it is not surprising that Turkey under a coalition government led by the Democratic Left Party provided substantial military aid to the United States during the war against Taliban Afghanistan. A September 2001 cabinet decree allowed U.S. forces to use Turkey's airbases and air space in prosecution of the war. In October, parliament endorsed a government proposal to send Turkish troops to Afghanistan and to allow foreign troops to station on Turkish soil. After the Taliban regime fell, the Turkish military twice assumed command of the International Security Assistance Force peacekeeping operation that was established to support the new Afghan government under Hamid Karzai. Turkey provided roughly 1,400 troops to this operation, which was the largest non-U.S. contingent and the only one from a Muslim-majority country.[206] To Turkish policymakers, opposing the Taliban

204. Füsun Türkmen, "Turkish-American Relations: A Challenging Transition," *Turkish Studies*, Vol. 10, No. 1 (March 2009), p. 114.

205. Quoted in Cengiz Çandar, "The Post-September 11 United States through Turkish Lenses," in Abramowitz, ed., *The United States and Turkey*, pp. 162–63. See also ibid., pp. 147, 152, 160–63; Eralp, "An Insider's View of Turkey's Foreign Policy and Its American Connection," pp. 127–28, 132; Ulusoy, *One Policy, Many Identities*, p. 132; Hale, *Turkish Foreign Policy*, pp. 342–43.

206. Fuller, *The New Turkish Republic*, p. 128.

regime "represented a happy marriage between domestic preferences [of bolstering secular democratic principles by harming radical Islamism] and external interests" (e.g., solidifying Turkey's alliance with the United States).[207]

The Iraq War and the developments preceding it reversed many of these calculations. Instead of supporting America's war on terrorism in the Middle East, many Kemalists became intense critics of this campaign. Changing perceptions of the dangers to Kemalists' domestic-ideological interests were the key variable responsible for this reversal. Instead of viewing American policies as a support to their ideological principles (supporting state secularism against Islamic fundamentalism), many Kemalists saw U.S. actions surrounding the Iraq War as threatening to core dimensions of their ideological beliefs: assertive secularism and assimilationist nationalism.

Kemalists hoped that 9/11 would bolster Turkey's value to America by increasing the importance of secular values in a battle with Islamism. In the lead-up to the war in Iraq, key U.S. policymakers—including President Bush and Secretary of State Colin Powell—did indeed publicly tout Turkey as a "model" to combat Islamic radicalism.[208] The problem for Kemalists was that American leaders at times advanced Turkey as an example of a "moderate Islamic" regime rather than as a secular one. In March 2004, Powell stated that "there is no reason to say that Islam and democracy cannot coexist. Why should there not be other Islamic Republics like Turkey?" This description of Turkey as an Islamic rather than a secular republic set off a firestorm among Kemalists. Immediately after Powell's statements, President Ahmet Sezer stated that "trying to promote some models that emphasize moderate Islam subconsciously by defining Turkey as an 'Islamic Republic' is not acceptable."[209] To Sezer, "Turkey is neither an Islamic republic, nor an example of moderate Islam."[210] General Hilmi Özkök, then the chief of the General Staff, similarly reminded people in 2005 that no Muslim-majority country should see Turkey as a political model for Islam because "Turkey is not a Muslim state but a secular and democratic country."[211] A year later, President Sezer stated that state secularism in Turkey "has never been under this much threat" while "both domestic and foreign forces seek Turkey to become a conservative Islamic model."[212]

207. Hale, *Turkish Foreign Policy*, p. 342.

208. Hale and Özbudun, *Islamism, Democracy and Liberalism in Turkey*, p. 144.

209. Both quotations from Kilinç, "Turkey and the Alliance of Civilizations," p. 67.

210. Quoted in Meliha Benli Altunişik, "The Turkish Model and Democratization in the Middle East," *Arab Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 27, Nos. 1/2 (Winter 2005), p. 46.

211. Quoted in Yavuz, *Secularism and Muslim Democracy in Turkey*, p. 210.

212. Quoted in Mario Zucconi, "The Impact of the EU Connection on Turkey's Domestic and Foreign Policy," *Turkish Studies*, Vol. 10, No. 1 (March 2009), p. 29.

As alluded to by this last quotation, American decision makers' advancement of Turkey as a prime example of a moderate Islamic state came at a time when Kemalists were already very anxious about the future of secularism in their country. To many Kemalists, the JDP's sweeping electoral victory in 2002 meant that Turkey confronted a major internal threat to state secularism. Statements made by American leaders supporting the JDP added an international dimension to this danger, which could only increase Kemalists' hostility toward the United States.

Ömer Taşpinar, who is a leading authority on Turkish politics and Turkish-American relations, expresses the relationship between the Bush administration's ideological objectives in the Middle East and developments in Turkish domestic politics, on the one hand, and Kemalists' increasingly hostile views toward America, on the other, as follows (writing in 2005): "At its roots, Turkey's current wave of distrust of the United States is [a] Kemalist identity problem." Furthermore, "It would not be an exaggeration to state that America's advocacy of 'moderate Islam' against the 'radical Islam' in the Middle East worries [Kemalists] the most. Turkey being portrayed as a model within the moderate Islam project has been conceived as a support for moderate Islam in Turkey . . . [This development] led to a clash between America's approach and Turkey's laic and Kemalist identity. Already alarmed over the landslide victory of [the] Justice and Development Party . . . [Kemalists'] laic reflexes have become overwhelmingly concerned with the 'model' expression of the U.S. . . . As a result, the U.S. policy on the democratization of the Middle East has clashed with Turkey's sensitive approach to secularism."[213]

The Iraq war compounded these dynamics by resulting in outcomes that endangered another core aspect of Kemalist ideology: assimilationist nationalism. America's toppling of the Saddam Hussein regime and subsequent support of regional and ethno-religious autonomy within a new federalist Iraq created the very real possibility of an independent Kurdistan in the northern part of this state. This development, Kemalists feared, would spur Kurdish identity claims and separatism in Turkey, which was an affront to Kemalists' understandings of nationalism.[214]

The more U.S. actions threatened bedrock dimensions of Kemalist ideology, the more hostile members of this ideological group became to America. According to the scholars Akçali and Perinçek, Kemalists in the

213. Taşpinar, "The Anatomy of Anti-Americanism in Turkey," pp. 5, 9, respectively. For similar analysis, see Türkmen, "Turkish-American Relations," p. 124; Aras and Polat, "From Conflict to Cooperation," p. 560.

214. Taşpinar, "The Anatomy of Anti-Americanism in Turkey," p. 10; Gunter and Yavuz, "Turkish Paradox," p. 294.

Republican People's Party in the 2000s identified America's Middle Eastern policies and support for them by Turkish governments as "the main reasons behind the decline of Kemalism and consequently the secular and social Turkish nation-state.[215] An outgrowth of these beliefs was increasing support of the "Eurasianist" international policies that I described earlier, i.e., distancing Turkey from the United States and its European allies and increased interest in security cooperation with China, Russia, and India.[216] As Tuncer Kılınç, a retired general and former secretary general of the Turkish National Security Council, argued in a May 2007 speech, "Turkey should leave the NATO alliance and search for possibilities for close cooperation with Russia and other power centers in the region." Such a geopolitical realignment was necessary in order to "protect [Turkey's] secular state and territorial integrity against Western efforts to promote moderate Islam and Kurdish independence."[217] Kılınç's statements were consistent with "a number of remarks . . . made publicly by high-ranking military officers, civilian bureaucrats and politicians suggesting that Turkey withdraw from NATO and intensify with other regional organizations instead."[218]

Many Kemalists' views and policies toward the United States in the 2000s, in sum, went through a similar transformation as relations with the EU, and for analogous reasons. For most of the twentieth century, Kemalists' dedication to Westernization made the United States (as well as the EU) an ideological ally. In the 2000s, however, American actions resulted in major threats to their key ideological principles. As the ideological links that had united Kemalists with the West weakened, "the Kemalist establishment [became] increasingly suspicious of the EU and the United States, whom they [saw] as naive toward Islamists and dangerously tolerant of Kurdish nationalism."[219]

215. Akçali and Perinçek, "Kemalist Eurasianism," p. 551.

216. Akçali and Perinçek, "Kemalist Eurasianism," pp. 562–63; Türkmen, "Turkish-American Relations," p. 123; Kibaroglu and Caglar, "Implications of Nuclear Iran for Turkey," p. 68.

217. Both quotations from Taşpinar, "Turkey's Middle East Policies," pp. 28 and 29 (note 8), respectively.

218. Kibaroglu and Caglar, "Implications of Nuclear Iran for Turkey," p. 68. This is not to say that all Kemalists advocated breaking with the United States or that there were not countervailing forces pushing for continued cooperation with America. There was, for example, a major improvement between the Turkish military and America in 2007 after the latter provided Turkey a green light, along with real-time intelligence, to engage in military operations against the PKK in Iraq (Hale and Özbudun, *Islamism, Democracy and Liberalism in Turkey*, pp. 92, 95). This development reduced Kemalists' perceptions of the dangers posed by America to Kemalist understandings of nationalism. However, as long as the United States (and the EU) support many of the JDP's religious and multicultural policies, Kemalists are likely to view America as an ideological threat. The result will be increasing suspicions and crises.

219. Taşpinar, "Turkey's Middle East Policies," p. 16.

Many JDP politicians also viewed America's Middle Eastern policies, especially the Iraq War, in very negative terms. Many held the United States—not Iraq—responsible for the war. This view, in combination with feelings of solidarity with the Iraqi people, led to widespread, and often intense, disapproval of American actions.[220]

Although both JDP and Kemalist leaders were critics of the Iraq War, there were key differences between these groups. Most importantly, variations in ideological distances with the United States that emerged in the 2000s led to very different overall threat environments. At the time when Kemalists' ideological ties with Western regimes were weakening due to perceived threats to these individuals' ideological goals, and when Kemalists were becoming increasingly illiberal in their efforts to deal with these domestic dangers (see above for details), JDP leaders continued to stress their commitment to liberalism and thus their important ideological agreement with America. These shared ideological objectives pushed JDP politicians to cooperate with the United States despite major frictions over the Iraq War and its consequences. In June 2003, for example, Foreign Minister Gül stated that Turks "share the same value system" as America. As a result, "Turkey is sincerely committed to a healthy, robust and forward looking, full partnership with the United States. From Central Europe all the way to the Far East, we see eye to eye on almost all strategic issues."[221] In June 2005, Prime Minister Erdoğan proclaimed that Turkey's "partnership with the United States [was] based on universal values and common interests [and thus] should not be underrated." Moreover, Erdoğan asserted that Turkish interests continued to benefit from America's active international engagement: "The United States should preserve its interest in the world . . . In order to deal with [the world's most pressing] problems, the world needs leadership of a power like the United States."[222]

JDP leaders' assertions of affinity and common interests with America were not just talk. Indeed, throughout the 2000s, "Turkey, led by the AKP [JDP] . . . jealously guarded its strategic partnership with the United States."[223] Shortly after the war in Iraq began, American and JDP leaders made important efforts to heal the damage done to the relationship. Twice

220. Jenkins, *Political Islam in Turkey*, pp. 176, 216.

221. Gül, "Turkey's Vision for the Transatlantic Partnership." See also Derk Kinnane Roelofsma, "Analysis: U.S., Turkey Kiss and Make Up," United Press International, June 23, 2003.

222. Both quotations in "Turkish Premier Says World Needs Power like USA to Resolve Global Issues," BBC Monitoring Europe, June 10, 2005. See also the quotation by Erdoğan in Burhanettin Duran, "JDP and Foreign Policy as an Agent of Transformation," in Yavuz, ed., *The Emergence of a New Turkey*, p. 293.

223. Joshua W. Walker, "Reexamining the U.S.-Turkish Alliance," *Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 31, No. 1 (Winter 2007–08), p. 106.

in June 2003, high-level Turkish and American officials met to try to help improve relations between the two countries.[224] In October 2003, the JDP government agreed to send 10,000 troops to Iraq to help stabilize the country (the offer was never acted upon, however, because the new Iraqi government refused the aid).[225] Turkey also allowed extensive use of the Incirlik airbase to provide logistical support for U.S. forces, including for resupply and troop rotations. Finally, JDP leaders played an important role in postwar political reconstruction in Iraq, by helping to persuade Sunni groups to participate in the drafting of the new Iraqi constitution and by sponsoring training programs for Iraqi politicians and journalists, among other things. The training programs included instruction on the nature of electoral systems and creating democratic institutions.[226]

A particularly important area of cooperation between JDP and American leaders resulted directly from their shared commitment to political liberalism. Both sets of policymakers believed that liberalization in the Islamic world would benefit their states' security, and that Turkey, because of its unique identity as both a Muslim-majority country and a democratic regime, was uniquely positioned to facilitate this objective. JDP policymakers, in other words, continued previous conservative parties' efforts to spread liberalism in the Middle East using Turkey as an ideological inspiration. JDP leaders were, if anything, even more committed to this objective than their predecessors. From virtually the time of their ascension to power in 2003, these politicians, as Philip Robins summarizes, committed themselves to be "proselytizers of democratization among the membership of the [Organization of the Islamic Conference]."[227] As Foreign Minister Gül said in 2003: "Now that Europe has finally overcome the divisions on the continent and virtually 'ended European history' [by the near universal spread of liberalism], time has come for another major project that would end the recent history in the Middle East . . . [T]he call for reform in the Middle East is louder than ever."[228] Prime Minister Erdoğan explained that Turkey was a "democratic, secular Republic, with a market economy . . . where the majority

224. Olson, *Turkey-Iran Relations, 1979–2004*, pp. 246–48.

225. Cameron S. Brown, "Turkey in the Gulf Wars of 1991 and 2003," *Turkish Studies*, Vol. 8, No. 1 (March 2007), p. 101.

226. Abdullah Gül, "Turkey: Vital Ally in the Cause of Long-Term Stability," *American Foreign Policy Interests*, Vol. 29 (2007), p. 179; "Turkey Assists in Iraq's Democratization Via Training Programs," *Turkish Daily News*, May 12, 2005.

227. Robins, "Turkish Foreign Policy Since 2002," p. 302. See also Meliha Benli Altunişik, "The Possibilities and Limits of Turkey's Soft Power in the Middle East," *Insight Turkey*, Vol. 10, No. 2 (2008), p. 47; Yakup Beris and Asli Gurkan, "Broader Middle East Initiative: Perceptions from Turkey," TÜSIAD, *Turkey in Focus* Issue 7 (July 2004).

228. Gül, "Turkey's Vision for the Transatlantic Partnership."

of the people are Muslims." It was thus an "inspiration for the peoples of the region that wish to see modernization, pluralism, democracy, the rule of law, fundamental rights and freedoms in their own countries."[229]

JDP decision makers' views fit with the Bush administration's efforts to spread liberal institutions and values to the Middle East as a key means of decreasing Islamic radicalism. JDP leaders, for example, supported President Bush's Greater Middle East Initiative (GMEI), which was dedicated to the promotion of political and economic liberalization in the Middle East.[230] Like President Bush, Justice and Development Party policymakers believed that "an improvement in democracy, economy, and human rights in the Middle East [would result in] . . . improvements in the regional security situation. The AKP [JDP] government agreed that a democratic Middle East with a well-functioning socioeconomic system would serve Turkish security interests."[231] In 2008 alone, the Turkish International Cooperation and Development Agency (TIKA) spent roughly $800 million on development aid, much of which was dedicated to liberalizing projects on "good governance" and "empowering women." There were also a good number of Turkish NGOs that engaged in liberalization efforts in the Middle East.[232] JDP leaders have also supported the democracy movements associated with the 2011 "Arab Spring." Turkey was one of the first governments to aid the Libyan rebels (including providing $300 million in cash) and one of the first to call for the resignation of former Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak. The JDP government has also been at the forefront of supporting the protesters in Syria, including forcefully condemning the Syrian regime's brutality, cutting off dialogue with it, and hosting an armed opposition group dedicated to the overthrow of the Asad government, even allowing it to initiate attacks across the border in Syria from inside a camp that is guarded by the Turkish military.[233] Foreign Minister Davutoğlu has asserted that Turkey wants to create an "axis of democracy" with democratic Egypt and potentially other regimes after authoritarian rulers have been ousted.[234]

229. Quoted in Ali Balci and Nebi Miş, "Turkey's Role in the Alliance of Civilizations: A New Perspective in Turkish Foreign Policy?," *Turkish Studies*, Vol. 9, No. 3 (September 2008), p. 399.

230. Bağci and Sinkaya, "The Greater Middle East Initiative and Turkey," pp. 168–71.

231. Aysegul Sever, "Turkey's Constraining Position on Western Reform Initiatives in the Middle East," *Mediterranean Quarterly*, Vol. 18, No. 4 (Fall 2007), p. 133.

232. Kirişci, Tocci, and Walker, *A Neighborhood Rediscovered*, pp. 17–18.

233. Liam Stack, "In Slap at Syria, Turkey Shelters Anti-Assad Fighters," *New York Times*, October 27, 2011; Judy Dempsey, "The Hazards in Turkey's New Strategy," *New York Times*, October 24, 2011.

234. Quoted in Anthony Shadid, "Turkey Predicts Alliance with Egypt as Regional Anchors," *New York Times*, September 18, 2011; also David D. Kirkpatrick, "Premier of Turkey Takes Role in Region," *New York Times*, September 12, 2011.

The ambitious strategy of helping to spread liberalism in the Middle East required close cooperation between Turkey and the United States.[235] Turkey within the framework of the GMEI sponsored in 2004 a new program called the "Democracy Assistance Dialogue." This program aimed to support democratic organizations and processes, increase literacy, train 100,000 teachers, and facilitate free trade in and among Muslim states.[236] In July 2006, the Turkish and American governments espoused the "shared vision document." The document stated that because the two countries "share the same set of values and ideals," they possessed common interests "that demand our concerted efforts." Under the document, the two countries "pledge themselves to work together on all issues of common concern, including promoting peace and stability in the broader Middle East through democracy." Turkey and U.S. leaders agreed to institutionalize dialogue between them at a number of levels, including at the "expert," "policy planning," undersecretary (who were to meet at least once a year), and secretarial levels. Bilateral exchanges among business and civil-society groups, media, scientists and engineers, educators, think tanks, and students were to be "actively promoted."[237]

Although JDP leaders shared the Bush administration's interest in spreading liberalism in the Middle East, the two groups disagreed profoundly over the best means to achieve this goal. JDP policymakers claimed that only cooperative policies such as economic integration, diplomatic engagement, and noninflammatory rhetoric could create an environment that was conducive to major political reforms.[238] These assertions directly opposed the Bush administration's willingness to use force to promote liberalization in the Middle East.

JDP leaders' belief that cooperative tactics were more effective than hard-line ones in spreading liberalism grew out of two primary considerations. The first was due to the effects of a particular set of foreign policy prescriptions (or what I have labeled ideological content) that dominated their decision making. They proclaimed that their primary foreign policy objective was to have "zero problems" with all of Turkey's neighbors, and that the only way to achieve this goal was through consistent, cooperative policies of political ties, economic interdependence, and other components

235. For quotations to this effect by Foreign Minister Gül, see Gül, "Turkey's Vision for the Transatlantic Partnership"; Gül, "Turkey," pp. 175–76.

236. "Turkey: Security Dimension of GME to Take Shape at NATO Summit," InfoProd, June 15, 2004.

237. All quotations are from "Shared Vision and Structured Dialogue to Advance the Turkish-American Strategic Partnership," State Department Documents and Publications, July 5, 2006.

238. Oğuzlu, "Middle Easternization of Turkey's Foreign Policy," pp. 8–9, 16.

of "soft power" that JDP leaders frequently referred to as a key source of Turkey's regional influence.[239] To JDP decision makers, these cooperative policies were the best approach for advancing Turkey's interests in virtually all cases, including helping to spread democratic values to illiberal states. JDP leaders' commitment to Islamic solidarity (analyzed above) reinforced these positions by creating a normative stigma against threatening fellow Muslim-majority countries in particular.

The importance of ideological content (e.g., "zero problems" with other countries in the Middle East) relative to the effects of ideological distance (e.g., conflicts with illiberal Muslim-majority countries) diminished to JDP politicians in reaction to the 2011 "Arab Spring." JDP leaders have supported liberalization throughout the Middle East even if this aid creates major problems with illiberal neighbors. Most notably, Turkey's support of revolutionary forces in Syria has created intense conflicts not only with the Asad regime, but Iran as well, since the latter has tried to bolster its longtime ally. Prime Minister Erdoğan's calls for Egypt and Tunisia to adopt secularism in their new constitutions have also been derided by Iranian leaders, who hope to see these countries adopt more hard-line Islamist governments. Ayatollah Mahmood Hashemi Shahroudi, the former chief of Iran's judiciary, for example, scornfully dismissed Turkey's efforts to spread democracy in the Middle East as an example of "liberal Islam" that was designed to try to counter Iran's regional influence.[240] The more important the effects of the liberal-illiberal ideological divide become to JDP leaders in relation to calls for Islamic solidarity and zero problems with all neighbors (ideological content), the more my argument is supported.

A second reason that pushed JDP politicians to advocate cooperative policies as the primary means of spreading liberalism in the Middle East grew out of a logic analogous to the incentives created in ideologically multipolar systems. Recall that I define ideological multipolarity as a system comprised of three or more clearly distinct sets of ideological beliefs. The proponents of these different belief systems usually view one another as the antithesis of their own principles.

These characteristics did not apply to JDP leaders. These politicians did not see their beliefs as separate from those in the West or Muslim-majority countries. To the contrary, JDP leaders saw themselves to be connected with both the West (through their commitment to political liberalism) and

239. Duran, "JDP and Foreign Policy as an Agent of Transformation," p. 292; Yavuz, *Secularism and Muslim Democracy in Turkey*, p. 202.

240. Quoted in Mustafa Akyol, "The Problem with 'Zero Problems,'" *New York Times*, November 15, 2011; Gonul Tol, "Ankara Is Trying to Have It Both Ways," *New York Times*, November 15, 2011.

the Islamic world (through their dedication to social Islam and Islamic solidarity). Again, these views formed the foundation of JDP politicians' belief that Turkey under their leadership was uniquely able to help forge an "alliance of civilizations" between Muslim-majority and Western states.

The fact that JDP decision makers' identity was "in between" those of Western and Muslim-majority states created a condition that was similar to those that exist in ideologically multipolar systems. In both scenarios, one ideological group confronts two others with different identities than its own.

JDP politicians understood very well that because their identity was closer to both Muslim-majority and Western states than either of the latter was to one another, important advantages for Turkey's interests were potentially created. In other words, the JDP's unique ideology, which combined dedication to both political liberalism and social Islam, resulted in international opportunities that would not have been available to other ideological groups. Most notably, the JDP's hybrid ideology increased Turkey's ability to be a valuable intermediary in relation to both Western and Muslim-majority countries. The more influence the JDP had with Muslim-majority states, the more valuable it was to the West, and vice versa. The scholar of Turkish politics Tarik Oğuzlu explains how JDP leaders used their commitment to social Islam and Islamic solidarity to increase Turkey's influence with Western states: "The old equation that 'the more Turkey renounces its Eastern identity, the more chances it will have in the confirmation of its Western identity' has been replaced [by the JDP] by a more pragmatic equation in that 'the acceptance of Turkey's placement in the West will be more likely through the strengthening of Turkey's links to the East.' Turkey is increasingly capitalizing on its Eastern identity with a view to securing its place within the West."[241] To this way of thinking, the more leverage Turkey has with Muslim-majority countries, the more valuable it will be to Western states. As Turkey's Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu expressed this point, "if Turkey does not have a solid stance in Asia, it would have very limited chances with the EU."[242]

JDP leaders' efforts to make use of ideological relationships in order to increase their influence with both Western and Muslim-majority countries depended, though, on adopting cooperative policies toward all sides. Consistently aggressive actions would have ruined the "honest broker" image and created the impression that the JDP was aligned with one group at the

241. Oğuzlu, "Middle Easternization of Turkey's Foreign Policy," p. 7.

242. Quoted in Ziya Öniş and Şuhnaz Yilmaz, "Between Europeanization and Euro-Asianism: Foreign Policy Activism During the AKP Era," *Turkish Studies*, Vol. 10, No. 1 (March 2009), p. 9.

expense of the other. Soft-line actions, in contrast, offered the best chance of maximizing Turkey's influence in relation to both sets of states.[243]

JDP leaders' strategy in this area met with important successes. The high level of prestige that the JDP enjoyed among many Muslims was demonstrated by a number of developments. In 2004, Turkey was elected chair of the Organization of the Islamic Conference.[244] Several groups—including Iranian, Syrian, and Palestinian leaders—also expressed an interest in Turkey acting as a mediator in their disputes with Western countries.[245] A 2009 survey of Arab public opinion revealed that 64 percent of those polled believed that Turkey's prospective membership in the EU made it an attractive partner for the Arab world.[246]

American leaders in the 2000s possessed similarly favorable views of Turkey when governed by the JDP. As discussed, the Bush administration welcomed Turkey as a model and partner to help spread liberalism in the Middle East. President Obama also looked to Turkey to be an intermediary and a key agent of conflict resolution in the Arab-Israeli peace process, as well as a model to facilitate liberalization in the wake of the 2011 "Arab Spring."[247] Both presidents, in short, recognized that JDP leaders' ideological principles could be a major benefit to U.S. interests, even if these principles at times resulted in a weakening of the U.S.-Turkish alliance compared to levels of cooperation in previous decades.

## CONCLUSION

This chapter's findings support all three hypotheses developed in Chapter 1. With regard to the first of these, there was a very close relationship between the degree of ideological differences dividing Turkish policymakers and their understandings of the threats posed by other countries, including Iran, Israel, the European powers, and the United States. Leaders

243. JDP leaders violated this tenet toward Israel in the late 2000s and early 2010s. These politicians' frequently intense criticisms of Israel's Palestinian policies caused many Israelis to doubt Turkey's interest and ability to be an impartial mediator in Arab-Israeli conflicts. A similar analysis applies to Turkey's support of democratic protesters in Syria in 2011, which has alienated both the Syrian and Iranian governments.

244. Fuller, *The New Turkish Republic*, p. 78.

245. Bonab, "Turkey's Emerging Role as a Mediator on Iran's Nuclear Activities"; Bronner, "Israel and Syria Announce Talks on Peace Treaty"; Daloglu, "Brokering Mideast Peace"; Hale and Özbudun, *Islamism, Democracy and Liberalism in Turkey*, p. 143.

246. Kirişci, Tocci, and Walker, *A Neighborhood Rediscovered*, p. 26.

247. Ömer Taşpinar, "Obama's Turkey Policy: Bringing Credibility to 'Strategic Partnership,'" *Insight Turkey*, Vol. 11, No. 1 (2009), pp. 13–21; Mark Landler, "New Challenges for Obama and Turkey's Premier," *New York Times*, September 19, 2011.

of different Turkish ideological groups often possessed very different threat perceptions of the same countries at the same time. In these instances, we can be confident that fluctuations in ideological distances were the key cause of variations in threat perceptions, because other competing variables—such as power distributions and other states' policies—were constant.

Not only did large ideological distances dividing various groups of Turkish leaders from their counterparts in other countries tend to result in high threat perceptions and small ideological distances in low threat perceptions, but the reasons for these relationships were consistent with the book's argument. Ideological distances affected both leaders' assessments of others' international intentions and their understandings of danger or support to their domestic interests. Of these two causal mechanisms, the latter had the greater impact in the Turkish case. Turkish decision makers from across the political spectrum were highly conscious of how interactions with an ideological enemy could subvert their domestic power and ideological principles, as well as how international alignment with an ideological ally could support their domestic objectives.

Although ideological distances had clear and major effects on Turkish leaders' threat perceptions, ideological content also shaped these outcomes in important ways. These are developments that are beyond my argument. The most important way in which ideological content shaped outcomes occurred when JDP leaders' commitment to social Islam at home created feelings of solidarity with fellow Muslims abroad, largely independently of domestic-ideological differences with the latter.

In support of Hypothesis 2 is the fact that Turkish decision makers of all ideological persuasions consistently called for alliances with ideologically similar regimes and not ideological enemies. With regards to the latter, large ideological differences dividing states' leaders resulted in significant barriers to security cooperation. Politicians eschewed security alignment with ideological rivals even when they confronted strong power incentives to cooperate with these states. Thus Welfare Party leaders did not want to ally with Israel, the EU, or the United States, even though Turkey in the 1990s had major conflicts with Syria, Iraq, and Iran. Similarly, Kemalists avoided alignment with all Middle Eastern countries except Israel, despite major threats from its neighbors.

In support of Hypothesis 3A was the interest that Turkish leaders exhibited throughout the post–Cold War years in spreading liberal values and institutions to Middle Eastern countries. These politicians believed that regime exportation would be a major boost to Turkish security interests, as the argument predicts.

The dominant tactic that JDP politicians used to try to spread liberalism to other Muslim-majority countries was cooperative policies. JDP leaders' use of accommodating policies resulted in part from efforts to take advantage of the fact that their ideological principles were closer to both Western and most Muslim-majority countries than the latter were to each other. As I detailed above, the adoption of soft-line actions as a product of these calculations is analogous to the incentives for such policies due to the effects of ideological multipolarity that I described in Hypothesis 3B.

The chapter's findings present both good and bad news for U.S. security. On the positive side is the fact that despite both the end of the Cold War and the rise to power in Turkey in 2002 of a party with Islamist roots, ideological variables continued to create a number of major common interests between the two countries. Most importantly, Turkish leaders' ideological beliefs led many of them to share the same enemies and allies with America, as well as an interest in spreading liberal values and institutions in regions neighboring Turkey.

There is, however, bad news for U.S. interests. First, the effects of ideological content are likely to result in distancing and frictions between Turkey and America. JDP leaders' ideological commitments to Islamic solidarity and the peaceful resolution of international disputes mean that the more America and its Western allies threaten Muslims' interests or use force in their Middle Eastern policies, the more tensions that will be created with Turkey. (As discussed above, however, the importance of ideological content in relation to ideological distance and the effects of the liberal-illiberal ideological divide has become less important to JDP leaders in reaction to the 2011 "Arab Spring." These politicians have been increasingly willing to support liberalization in the Middle East even if it means major tensions with illiberal neighbors, such as Syria and Iran. This change is bound to increase U.S.-Turkish cooperation).

Even these developments, though, are not necessarily completely negative for U.S. interests. The effect of ideological content on JDP leaders' international relations has created key differences with the Americans over means, but not necessarily ends (e.g., JDP leaders frequently asserted that soft-line tactics were much more effective than hard-line ones for both spreading democracy in the Middle East and reducing the likelihood of WMD proliferation, which were goals U.S. policymakers shared). JDP politicians also argued that while they continued to be tied to the West through their commitment to political liberalism, greater independence from the United States will ultimately benefit American interests by giving Turkey more credibility—and thus more influence—with fellow Muslim-majority countries.[248] According to this position, the more independent Turkey is of the United States—with

248. See Tavernise, "For Turkey, an Embrace of Iran is a Matter of Building Bridges."

the occasional disputes that is created by this independence—the more useful Turkey may be in advancing the two states' common regional objectives.

A second, more troubling, piece of bad news for American interests is that although ideological calculations have historically provided a key foundation to the Turkish-American alliance, the continuation of this binding force is not guaranteed. I demonstrated how Kemalists' growing illiberalism and ideological disagreements with Western states in the 2000s were central to these leaders' increasing suspicions of both America and the EU. There were also some signs at the end of the 2000s that JDP leaders were losing their enthusiasm for domestic liberalization.[249] JDP politicians did continue with some liberalizing policies in these years. In May 2008, for example, the JDP (in a move welcomed by the EU) passed a law that limited restrictions on free speech.[250] In March 2010, JDP parliamentarians proposed constitutional changes that would make it harder to ban political parties and easier to prosecute military officials in civilian courts. The reforms also strengthened the rights of women, children, and civil servants. These changes passed in a September 2010 referendum.[251] Due largely to the JDP's liberalization efforts, more minority candidates were able to run for office in the 2011 elections than ever before.[252]

Although Turkey under the JDP's leadership has become more liberal and respectful of internationally recognized human rights than it has ever been, the pace of liberalization championed by JDP leaders clearly slowed by the end of the 2000s. Even more alarming is the fact that JDP politicians at the end of the decade demonstrated increasing authoritarian tendencies mixed in with some liberalizing reforms. Prime Minister Erdoğan engaged in a number of repressive, illiberal policies against his critics. In the summer of 2009, the JDP government levied a massive $2.5 billion fine on a Turkish press group that frequently ran stories critical of the prime minister and his policies (spokesmen of the EU expressed deep concern over this action).[253] Reflecting this and similar repressive policies, Turkey in 2010 ranked 138th out of 178 countries in the "world press freedom index" issued by the Paris-based advocacy group Reporters without Borders.[254] The government also

249. Morton Abramowitz and Henri J. Barkey, "Turkey's Transformers: The AKP Sees Big," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 88, No. 6 (November/December), pp. 118–28.

250. "Turkish Law Easing Curbs on Speech Wins Praise," *Associated Press*, May 1, 2008.

251. On these points, see Sebnem Arsu, "Turkey's Governing Party Proposes Changes in the Constitution," *New York Times*, March 22, 2010; Sebnem Arsu and Dan Bilefsky, "Turkish Reforms Pass by Wide Margin," *New York Times*, September 12, 2010.

252. Güsten, "Big Changes Open Politics to Turkish Minorities."

253. "A Clear Assault on the Press," *International Herald Tribune*, September 14, 2009.

254. Sebnem Arsu, "In Turkey, Thousands Protest a Crackdown on Press Freedom," *New York Times*, March 13, 2011.

threatened to eliminate the prestigious Turkish Industry and Business Association (TUSIAD) if it did not side with the JDP in key political votes.[255] After 2007, Erdoğan's government arrested hundreds of people who were accused of participating in a coup plot. Many have accused Erdoğan of targeting individuals simply because they were opponents of the regime, and not because they were engaged in illegal activities.[256]

These trends are disturbing for U.S. interests. If Turkey moves in an authoritarian direction, the ideological foundations of cooperation between Turkey and America will weaken. Moreover, if authoritarian tendencies increase, there is the possibility that Turkey could become an "illiberal democracy." One of the hallmarks of "illiberal" or "emerging" democracies is leaders' use of nationalistic statements and policies to distract the populace from domestic problems, including shallow or slow liberalization.[257] Erdoğan's occasional public and harsh rebukes of Israel in the late 2000s and early 2010s may conform to this pattern. Anti-Israeli statements play into nationalistic sentiments, which help to make Erdoğan popular at home and abroad despite growing authoritarian policies. Similar analysis applies to the JDP's backing away in the late 2000s from some of its promises of cultural liberalization for Turkey's Kurdish populations in favor of more nationalistic rhetoric.[258] Growing nationalism among JDP leaders would result in an ideological convergence between these policymakers, Kemalists, and NAP members, which, in turn, would likely lead to increasingly defiant and prideful Turkish foreign policies. Such actions would result in greater frictions with the United States.

Continued liberalization in Turkey, in contrast, will provide major supports to the Turkish-American alliance for the reasons discussed above, even if Turkey policymakers exhibit more independence and disagreements with the United States than they displayed in previous decades. The United States thus has a preeminent international-security interest in the evolution of Turkish domestic politics.

255. Judy Dempsey, "Turkish Opposition in Need of an Update," *New York Times*, September 15, 2010.

256. Dan Bilefsky, "In Turkey, Trial Casts Wide Net of Mistrust," *New York Times*, November 22, 2009; Gareth Jenkins, "Between Fact and Fantasy: Turkey's Ergenekon Investigation," available at: http://www.silkroadstudies.org/new/inside/publications/Jenkins.html. Accessed November 15, 2011.

257. See Edward D. Mansfield and Jack Snyder, *Electing to Fight: Why Emerging Democracies Go to* War (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2005). On this danger in Turkey, see Steven A. Cook, "Turkey's War at Home," *Survival*, Vol. 51, No. 5 (October–November 2009), pp. 105–20.

258. See Henri J. Barkey, "Turkey's Moment of Inflection," *Survival*, Vol. 52, No. 3 (June–July 2010), pp. 29–50.

## CHAPTER 5

# Ideologies and U.S.-Saudi Relations after the Cold War's End

This chapter examines the effects of ideological variables on relations between the United States and Saudi Arabia. On one level, this is a straightforward exercise. The history of the U.S.-Saudi alliance in key ways demonstrates the triumph of realist over ideological calculations. The ideological differences dividing Saudi and American leaders were extreme, yet after the 1940s the two states remained in a tight and enduring alliance. The decision makers sometimes had major policy disagreements, but there was not the consistent level of ideologically induced threats and disputes between them that dominated relations as in other cases studied in this book.

Although realist arguments can explain many of the dimensions of the U.S.-Saudi alliance through the decades, ideological variables also affected the relationship in critical ways. The fact that both Saudi and American leaders during the Cold War were intensely hostile to other ideologies, namely Nasserism and especially communism (and not just, in the latter case, Soviet power), not only solidified the alliance but in some instances was a more significant source of cooperation between the two states than were shared material interests.

The importance of ideological variables to U.S.-Saudi relations grew after the Cold War's end, which is the primary time period that I examine. Three developments were particularly important in these years. First, after the Soviet Union's demise, and especially after the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, the ideological differences dividing Saudi Arabia and America became much more salient to the relationship, especially from U.S. leaders'

perspective. Powerful American policymakers asserted that the illiberalism of Saudi domestic politics was causing increasing hostilities—even enmity—with the United States. Although the alliance survived these escalating threat perceptions, this change was nevertheless a major development.

Second, as in the Cold War years, mutual enmity against a shared ideological rival provided a major boost to the alliance in the post–Cold War period. In 2003, Saudi Arabia suffered a series of terrorist attacks perpetrated by Islamic extremists. These Islamists were not only motivated by ideological objectives and fears, but they viewed *both* the United States and the Al Saud regime as fierce ideological rivals. Saudi and American leaders reciprocated these sentiments. This shared ideological enmity played a critical role in resuscitating the Saudi-American alliance at a time when it was vulnerable.

Third, in the 2000s the Saudi government initiated important liberalizing political and social changes in a multitude of areas. These developments were significant not only for the evolution of Saudi domestic politics, but for international relations as well. The more Saudi Arabia liberalizes, the more stable the U.S.-Saudi alliance is likely to be as the ideological barriers to cooperation shrink. Moreover, analyzing the international preferences of those Saudi groups that were most interested in domestic liberalization allows us to establish if there was a relationship between domestic ideological beliefs and foreign policies in ways that are consistent with the book's argument.

This chapter develops in detail all of these points. Although the bulk of my analysis is of U.S.-Soviet relations after the Cold War's end, I begin my examination of the alliance during the Cold War. My main objective is to examine the reasons why the extreme ideological differences dividing Saudi and American leaders in these years had relatively minor effects on their threat perceptions and consequent policies toward one another. Because the Saudi-American alliance in this period in important ways does not support my argument, this case will help us understand the limits of ideological analyses, as well the conditions under which realist theories are likely to become more accurate than my own. Examining Saudi-American cooperation also helps fulfill one of the main objectives of the book: understanding the conditions under which ideological enemies are likely to ally.

## U.S.-SAUDI RELATIONS DURING THE COLD WAR: IDEOLOGY AND REALPOLITIK

There can be no doubt that the ideological differences dividing Saudi Arabia and the United States throughout the Cold War were extremely large. Indeed, it is difficult to imagine two regimes that were dedicated to more

disparate principles. Saudi Arabia is a monarchy whose ruling family, the Al Saud, created a highly repressive authoritarian regime. A significant component of the illiberalism of the kingdom resulted from the fact that the Al Saud legitimated their power by allying with religious leaders dedicated to Wahhabi Islam (named after an eighteenth-century cleric, Muhammad ibn Abd-al-Wahhab). Wahhabi Muslims are quintessential Islamists as I defined this term in chapter 1, and thus are fundamentally hostile to the foundations of liberal-democratic regimes. They argue, for example, for "the total fusion of religion and politics. For the Wahhabis of all generations, Islam is not only a religion, it is a comprehensive system for governing everything public, social and political."[1] These views prescribed very broad and intrusive governmental powers so that all aspects of life (including, among other things, dress, decorum, and sex) could be regulated. Saudi Arabia's judicial system is based on Islamic legal principles, and the Quran and Sunna form the kingdom's constitution.

On core liberal issues, such as political participation, freedom of expression, and religious and political pluralism, Wahhabi scholars took uncompromising stands, most of which solidified the Al Saud's political power. Wahhabi clerics asserted that obeying the political authorities was for all intents and purposes an unqualified religious obligation. According to these religious leaders, by questioning rulers' authority "a Muslim risks committing . . . a sin equal in its gravity to disobeying God and the Prophet."[2] Political rebellion and activism, even if peaceful, were therefore equivalent to religious rebellion.[3] Even if the political leaders' orders violated Islamic law, the Grand Mufti of Saudi Arabia, Sheikh Abdul Aziz bin Baz, warned that "no opposition must be raised against the rulers . . . but rather they must be advised through ways of tranquility."[4] Political demonstrations and similar expressions of dissent and freedom of expression were, according to Grand Mufti Sheikh Abdul-Aziz al-Sheikh, "forbidden by Islamic law, since [they were] anarchic act[s] that never [serve] any objectives of

1. Muhammad al-Atawneh, "Is Saudi Arabia a Theocracy? Religion and Governance in Contemporary Saudi Arabia," *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 45, No. 5 (September 2009), pp. 724–25.

2. Madawi Al-Rasheed, "The Minaret and the Palace: Obedience at Home and Rebellion Abroad," in Madawi Al-Rasheed, ed., *Kingdom Without Borders: Saudi Political, Religious and Media Frontiers* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), p. 205.

3. Madawi Al-Rasheed, *Contesting the Saudi State: Islamic Voices from a New Generation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 51–53.

4. Quoted in Muhammad al-Atawneh, "Saudi Arabia: Why the '*Ulama* are Stalling Liberalization," in Joshua Teitelbaum, ed., *Political Liberalization in the Persian Gulf* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), p. 97.

5. Quoted in al-Atawneh, "Saudi Arabia," p. 104. See also Al-Rasheed, "The Minaret and the Palace," p. 205; Mohammed Ayoob and Hasan Kosebalaban, "Introduction: Unraveling the Myths," in Mohammed Ayoob and Hasan Kosebalaban, eds., *Religion and Politics in Saudi Arabia: Wahhabism and the State* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2009), p. 2.

the nation."[5] Wahhabi clerics were also highly intolerant of different interpretations of Islam (especially Shiism) and both Judaism and Christianity. Wahhabi authorities not only declared the clear superiority of their views in relation to these other religious beliefs, but in some cases proscribed "true" Muslims from interacting with adherents of these other sects and religions.[6] The union of the Al Saud dynasty and Wahhabi Islam—into what one scholar has aptly described as a "theo-monarchy"—thus resulted in the creation of a highly illiberal regime in which few basic political or civil liberties were protected.[7]

Given the illiberalism of the Saudi regime, Hypothesis 1 of my argument would predict high threat perceptions and consequent hostilities between Saudi and American leaders. On one level, this prediction was supported. Saudi decision makers in particular were worried about the potential subversive effects created by close interactions with liberal America. This was especially true for Wahhabi clerics, but the Al Saud expressed similar fears. King Abdul Aziz, for example, told the chief American envoy during World War II, William Eddy, that "we will use your iron, but leave our faith alone." The king's position, Eddy relayed, "was that the Koran regulated all matters of faith, family, and property, which were not for unbelievers to get involved with. 'Our patriarchal authority and the veiling of women are none of your business. On the other hand, you have much that we need and will accept: radio, airplanes, pumps, oil-drilling rigs and technological know-how.'"[8]

These fears of subversion despite common interests never disappeared, and in some ways they escalated over time. General Norman Schwarzkopf, who was the U.S. commander of the operations in 1990 and 1991 to defend Saudi Arabia from a potential Iraqi attack and to liberate Kuwait from Iraqi occupation, stated in his memoirs that ideological dangers were extremely important to Saudi leaders: "To my consternation, [the Saudis'] most pressing concern was neither the threat from Saddam [Hussein] nor the enormous joint military enterprise on which we were embarked. What loomed largest for them was the

6. Al-Atawneh, "Saudi Arabia," pp. 98–102; Al-Rasheed, *Contesting the Saudi State*, pp. 35–36.

7. Al-Atawneh, "Is Saudi Arabia a Theocracy?, p. 721. By the term "theo-monarchy," al-Atawneh is referring to the fact that Saudi Arabia is not a theocracy because of the subordinate role that the clergy play in politics (much more about this below). The kingdom, however, is also more than a traditional monarchy because of both the legitimating function of Wahhabism, and because the clergy's influence over social policies sometimes has political effects.

8. Quoted in Thomas W. Lippman, "A Most Improbable Alliance: Placing Interests over Ideology," in Ayoob and Kosebalaban, eds., *Religion and Politics in Saudi Arabia*, p. 125.

cultural crisis triggered by this sudden flood of Americans into their kingdom."[9]

The ideological differences dividing Saudi Arabia and America thus did create important incentives against cooperation, or what I have called "threshold effects" against close ties between countries. These ideological impediments to alignment, though, were clearly not determinative of U.S.-Saudi relations. To the contrary, the two countries throughout the Cold War forged a long-lasting alliance that involved close cooperation in a number of areas, including economic development and exchange, sales of weaponry, commitments to protect the others' security, placement of U.S. military bases and personnel in Saudi Arabia, and close coordination against common enemies.

Five factors, taken together, explain why the large ideological differences dividing the United States and Saudi Arabia had a relatively minor impact on their relations throughout the second half of the twentieth century. First, these two states throughout the Cold War had in common a number of major material interests, both security and economic. Leaders in both states wanted to prevent penetration by the Soviet Union into the Middle East. American policymakers also desired access to Saudi Arabia's huge petroleum reserves, and the Al Saud wanted American aid to help develop Saudi Arabia's technological, economic, and military infrastructure. To this argument the exchange of "oil for security" was the key factor underlying the U.S.-Saudi alliance since the 1940s.

The mere existence of common major material interests, however, is often not sufficient for ideological enemies to set aside their differences and ally. For example, the Islamic Republic of Iran, like Saudi Arabia, both shared with America enmity with the Soviet Union and possessed very large oil and natural gas reserves. But to Iranian Islamists, ideological differences with America were more important to their policies toward the United States than were material interests. Similarly, there were many influential Wahhabi clerics outside of the religious establishment in Saudi Arabia who rejected the alliance with America at the same time that the Al Saud cultivated it (more about this tendency in a later section). Thus, in very similar ideological and material circumstances, some groups of leaders

9. H. Norman Schwarzkopf, *It Doesn't Take a Hero* (New York: Bantam, 1992), p. 386. Throughout Operations Desert Shield and Storm, Schwarzkopf and other high-ranking American officials met almost daily with Saudi officials to discuss efforts to minimize America's subversive impact on Saudi culture. For details, see Thomas W. Lippman, *Inside the Mirage: America's Fragile Partnership with Saudi Arabia* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2004), pp. 304–07; David B. Ottaway, *The King's Messenger: Prince Bandar Bin Sultan and America's Tangled Relationship with Saudi Arabia* (New York: Walker & Co., 2008), pp. 89–90, 95.

privileged ideological variables over realist calculations, others (e.g., the Al Saud) did the reverse.

Similarly, from the perspective of American leaders it is clear that large supplies of fossil fuels have not been a sufficient cause of close ties with the United States. Indeed, America has had highly hostile interactions after 1970 with such major fuel-producing countries as Iran, Iraq, Libya, the Soviet Union, and Venezuela. Because large deposits of oil have not necessarily resulted in friendly relations with the United States, Saudi Arabia's natural resources alone cannot account for the closeness of the U.S.-Saudi alliance over the decades.

These last facts point to a second reason why Saudi and American leaders allied throughout the Cold War. In order for ideological enemies to ally for realist reasons, not only must states share material interests, *but their leaders must be willing to act on these commonalities*. Leaders must, in other words, give greater priority to their material than ideological interests. Although many groups of decision makers frequently do not adhere to this calculus (as the evidence presented in the other chapters attest), the Al Saud did. Key members of the Saudi monarchy consistently defined their interests as interdependent with America's despite the enormity of the ideological differences dividing the two countries (and the Americans, as we shall see, reciprocated this point of view). Unlike Iranian Islamists, and even many Wahhabi Muslims in Saudi Arabia, common material interests simply weighed more heavily on the foreign policies of the Al Saud than did potential threats created by ideological differences with the United States.

The tendency for some leaders to be much more realist in orientation than others having similar ideological and material interests points to a different way of thinking about the relationship between realist and ideological calculations than was discussed in chapter 1. "Realism" may itself be a belief system to which some policymakers subscribe.[10] Some groups, in other words, may simply define their interests primarily in material terms, which marginalizes the effects of ideological variables on their international relations. In this view, the Al Saud were simply more "realist" in their understanding of their relationship with America than were other groups

10. This statement is similar to a core constructivist belief that "anarchy is what states make of it," meaning that realist policies do not inevitably flow from the lack of an effective, reliable world government to protect states' security (i.e., a condition of international anarchy). Instead, leaders' preexisting beliefs that realist policies are the best means of advancing their interests are what make realist actions so prevalent. There is, however, nothing inevitable about this outcome. See Alexander Wendt, "Anarchy Is What States Make of It: the Social Construction of Power Politics," *International Organization* Vol. 46, No. 2 (Spring 1992), pp. 391–425.

operating at the same time and with similar material and ideological incentives and constraints.[11]

The third key reason why the huge ideological differences dividing Saudi Arabia and America had relatively minor effects on these states' relations throughout the Cold War is closely related to the previous one. The Al Saud possessed sufficient political power to convince and/or coerce other ideological groups—most notably Wahhabi clerics in the Saudi religious establishment—to support the former's realist foreign policies.

A critical development in the evolution of Saudi domestic politics over the course of the twentieth century was that the most influential Wahhabi clerics were bureaucratized and incorporated into governmental agencies. This outcome was due to a political bargain between religious scholars and leaders (ulema) and the Al Saud princes. In exchange for major influence over social, cultural, and religious affairs in Saudi Arabia, the ulema agreed to help legitimate Al Saud rule. A key result of this arrangement was that not only did religious leaders become beholden and subordinate in the political sphere to the Al Saud princes, but their personal and institutional interests became dependent on the continuation of the Saudi monarchy. As Gregory Gause explains, over time "the ulama have become agents of the state; their fortunes and religious project are directly linked to the continuation of al-Saud rule in Arabia."[12]

Because the religious establishment was successfully bureaucratized, those international initiatives that the Al Saud adopted that ran counter to Wahhabi ideological inclinations were nevertheless invariably supported and legitimated by the ulema.[13] Thus when the Al Saud believed that realist foreign policies were the best means of protecting and advancing the interests of the Saudi state, the ulema became de facto realists because they

11. Middle East expert Gregory Gause offers related analysis. According to him, the key difference between Saudi and Iranian leaders was their "level of acceptance of the regional political order." Both sets of leaders pursued Islamist policies domestically, "but the Saudi government basically accepts the regional order as it is," while the Iranians do not. Because the Al Saud define their international interests in very different terms than their Iranian counterparts, the former can be much more realist in their foreign policies, including their alliance choices. (Gause's quotation is from personal correspondence, February 4, 2009.) This description applies best to Iranian conservatives. As explained in chapter 2, Iranian reformers were much more accepting of the international status quo than were Iranian conservatives.

12. F. Gregory Gause III, "Official Wahhabism and the Sanctioning of Saudi-U.S. Relations," in Ayoob and Kosebalaban, eds., *Religion and Politics in Saudi Arabia*, p. 135. For similar analysis, see ibid., p. 136; Ayoob and Kosebalaban, "Introduction," pp. 2, 4; al-Atawneh, "Is Saudi Arabia a Theocracy?, p. 728; Al-Rasheed, *Contesting the Saudi State*, pp. 57, 59; Gwenn Okruhlik, "State Power, Religious Privilege, and Myths about Political Reform," in Ayoob and Kosebalaban, eds., *Religion and Politics in Saudi Arabia*, p. 92.

13. For details and examples of this tendency, see Gause, "Official Wahhabism and the Sanctioning of Saudi-U.S. Relations."

supported the international actions of the Al Saud. Again, supporting the monarchy's foreign policies—no matter how ideologically onerous these policies were—was the only way the religious establishment could maintain its substantial influence over cultural and religious affairs at home. The ulema thus at critical times sacrificed ideologically informed policies abroad in order to preserve such actions domestically.

One of the key foreign policy initiatives that the ulema religiously sanctioned (despite ideological incentives not to do so) in order to help provide stability for the Saudi regime was close ties with the United States. This alliance, and especially the stationing of thousands of Americans troops in the kingdom after Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in 1990, was a major affront to Wahhabi prohibitions about consorting too closely with "infidels." Close association with the United States also activated many Wahhabis' intense fears of ideological subversion by Western principles.[14] Many dissident Islamists expressed precisely these concerns, as I discuss in greater detail in a subsequent section. However, because the most powerful clerics in Saudi Arabia had become agents of the state, "the official ulama . . . gave the regime the religious cover it needed to pursue a foreign policy based explicitly on state and regime interest, not Wahhabi Islam."[15] Saudi domestic politics, in sum, had evolved such that the ideological group (Wahhabi clerics) that was most likely to be highly critical of allying with the United States had been marginalized in the decision-making process in foreign affairs. The result was that "Wahhabism [placed] no substantial barriers against Saudi Arabia's relationships with outside powers."[16]

The fourth major factor that helped to minimize the effects of ideological differences on American-Saudi relations was the policies adopted by the U.S. government. Administrations from Franklin Roosevelt through at least George H. W. Bush adopted actions and statements explicitly designed to minimize America's potential subversive impact on the illiberal Saudi regime.[17] Realist calculations were central to these preferences. The Americans had very strong security and economic incentives to maintain close ties with Saudi Arabia, and these incentives were more important to American policymakers than the effects of ideological variables, just as realist arguments assert. As the scholar Thomas Lippmann explains, "the archives of the State Department [and] the U.S. military . . . were replete with policy statements and exhortations to the effect that Saudi beliefs and practices

14. Al-Atawneh, "Saudi Arabia," pp. 90–91.

15. Gause, "Official Wahhabism and the Sanctioning of Saudi-U.S. Relations," p. 141.

16. Gause, "Official Wahhabism and the Sanctioning of Saudi-U.S. Relations," p. 143.

17. Lippman, "A Most Improbable Alliance"; Ayoob and Kosebalaban, "Introduction," pp. 4–5.

were to be respected, rather than challenged or ridiculed. However alien the Saudi system might have been to Americans steeped in the values of individual liberty and impartial justice, outsiders were instructed not to concern themselves with it . . . [T]he Americans were constantly reminded that they were in the country for economic and strategic reasons, not to alter Saudi Arabian society."[18] A 1951 State Department memorandum that would guide American policies toward the kingdom for decades expressed this point: "[I]f we do not attempt to upset the basic religious patterns of life in Saudi Arabia by too rapid an introduction of Western ways, our relations with Saudi Arabia will become increasingly cordial." This largely realist attitude was the best way of neutralizing various Saudi groups' "fanatical religious opposition to change and the growth of Western influences" in Saudi Arabia.[19]

To condense much of the preceding analysis, a key reason why the American-Saudi alliance was so tight and durable throughout the Cold War despite massive ideological differences was that *both* U.S. leaders and the Al Saud were realists toward one another *at the same time*. Although there was nothing inevitable about this synchronicity, and although it was rare compared to the relationships studied in the other empirical chapters in this book, this factor was critical to U.S.-Saudi cooperation throughout the Cold War.

A fifth and final key factor that pushed Saudi and American leaders to set aside their ideological differences and ally was their mutual antipathy toward other ideologies, especially communism and Nasserism. The Saudi-American alliance throughout the Cold War was not simply a product of shared material interests, e.g., the sale and purchase of oil or mutual fear of Soviet power. There was also an ideological foundation to Saudi and U.S. leaders' cooperation that was based on shared enmity toward other ideological groups. A condition of ideological multipolarity thus facilitated alignment between the United States and Saudi Arabia despite the two states' huge ideological differences, just as Hypothesis 2 predicts.

American policymakers throughout the Cold War believed that the religiosity of the Saudi regime could be a powerful barrier to Saudi cooperation with the Soviet Union, and thus a major benefit to U.S. security. According, for example, to a policy statement prepared by the State Department in 1951, the "general antipathy of the Saudi Arabs for communism"

18. Lippman, "A Most Improbable Alliance," p. 126; also pp. 127–30; Lippman, *Inside the Mirage*, pp. 72, 215–16.

19. Quoted in Lippman, *Inside the Mirage*, p. 281. See also Rachel Bronson, *Thicker than Oil: America's Uneasy Partnership with Saudi Arabia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), pp. 33, 90.

provided strong incentives for deepening U.S.-Saudi cooperation.[20] In a 1953 letter to King Abdul Aziz, President Dwight Eisenhower wrote that the king's "support in the common cause against godless communism has been a source of inspiration to me and the American people."[21] This was the only letter of introduction from Eisenhower to a Middle Eastern state that mentioned this shared interest in fighting communism. Some within the Eisenhower administration even referred to the Saudi king as an "Islamic pope," whose religious identity would serve American interests in the Cold War.[22] The Ronald Reagan administration was especially convinced that the religiosity of Saudi Arabia could help roll back Soviet influence around the world. A 1986 interagency meeting concluded that "our best bet, in a long term PD [public diplomacy] strategy, is to make Communism the issue . . . [W]e should stress the diametrical opposition of Communist and Islamic values . . . Such an approach should strike a resonant chord in the strongly anti-Communist Arabian peninsula as well as appeal to pious Moslems generally who should be reminded of the USSR's militant atheism."[23]

The scholar Rachel Bronson summarizes U.S. leaders' views held throughout the Cold War of how Saudi Islamism could aid the United States in its struggle with the Soviet Union: "Because Soviet-inspired Communism was based on a hostility toward religious belief, the more religious a country, the more likely it would be to rail against Communism and look toward the United States . . . Saudi Arabia, a deeply religious state, was [for the Americans] the perfect prophylactic against the spread of Communism and [thus] a natural American partner."[24]

Mutual antipathy toward communism was not the only ideological force that pushed Saudi Arabia and America together during the Cold War, though it was the longest-lasting. From the late 1950s to the late 1960s,

20. Quoted in Lippman, *Inside the Mirage*, p. 280; see also p. 213. President Harry Truman similarly noted in his diary in June 1947 that the Saudis "hate the Bolsheviks" (quoted in Bronson, *Thicker than Oil*, p. 45).

21. Quoted in Bronson, *Thicker than Oil*, p. 64.

22. Bronson, *Thicker than Oil*, p. 74. See also Nathan J. Citino, *From Arab Nationalism to OPEC: Eisenhower, King Saud, and the Making of U.S.-Saudi Relations* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002), p. 126.

23. Quoted in Bronson, *Thicker than Oil*, p. 181.

24. Bronson, *Thicker than Oil*, p. 26. Thomas Lippman similarly attributes the origins of the Saudi-American alliance to the Saudis' "paranoia about the spread of communism and an awareness of their own vulnerability" (Lippman, *Inside the Mirage*, p. 276). For similar analysis, see Toby Jones, "Shifting Sands: The Future of U.S.-Saudi Relations," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 85, No. 2 (March/April 2006), p. 166; Rachel Bronson, "Understanding U.S.-Saudi Relations," in Paul Aarts and Gerd Nonneman, eds., *Saudi Arabia in the Balance: Political Economy, Society, Foreign Affairs* (New York: New York University Press, 2005), pp. 372–98; Asad AbuKhalil, *The Battle for Saudi Arabia: Royalty, Fundamentalism, and Global Power* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2003), pp. 29, 71.

Saudi Arabia was engaged in an ideological battle with Egypt led by Gamal Abdul Nasser, which was a struggle that Malcolm Kerr described as the "Arab cold war."[25] Nasser's pan-Arabist, socialist, and secularist principles were a major ideological threat to the "theo-monarchical" Saudi regime. Each of the two countries, as a result, went to great lengths in the 1960s to enhance throughout the Middle East the appeal of its ideological principles at the expense of the other's, including engaging in competing forcible ideological exportations in Yemen's civil war from 1962 to 1967. The championing and sponsorship of Islamist ideology was the chief means by which Saudi Arabia combated Nasserism.[26]

Saudi Arabia's ideological struggle with Nasserism became intertwined with U.S.-Saudi relations after Nasser's Egypt aligned with the Soviet Union. The spread of Nasserism in the Middle East was thus a conduit to enhanced Soviet influence in the region. The more the spread of Islamism helped to weaken Nasserism's international appeal (and also later the Baathist principles of Syria and Iraq), the more America's interests in its struggle with the Soviet Union were advanced. The result, as the scholar Rashid Khalidi explains, was that "Saudi Arabia's use of Islam as an ideological tool [became] a major addition to the arsenal of the United States." "Since forces aligned with the United States claimed to defend the Middle East against atheistic communism and its secular Arab nationalist allies, a particular form of militant political Islam [championed by Saudi Arabia] . . . provided an ideological banner and a critical rallying point."[27]

American decision makers' statements about the importance of Saudi ideological beliefs to the advancement of America's security interests, especially against the Soviet Union, were not just talk. Instead, the Americans "actively sought to encourage Saudi religious efforts" to combat Soviet influence around the globe.[28] The Saudis did not disappoint. King Abdul Aziz told President Harry Truman's emissaries that he "would never abandon his people or his religion" to communism.[29] In 1956, King Saud asked the ulema to issue a fatwa that proscribed taking aid from communist bloc countries.[30] King Faisal wrote to President Lyndon Johnson that

25. Malcolm Kerr, *The Arab Cold War: Gamal 'Abd al-Nasir and His Rivals, 1958–1970*, 3rd ed. (London: Oxford University Press, 1971).

26. On these points, see Kerr, *The Arab Cold War*; John M. Owen, *The Clash of Ideas in World Politics: Transnational Networks, States, and Regime Change, 1500–2010* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), pp. 215–22.

27. Rashid Khalidi, "The Superpowers and the Cold War in the Middle East," in *The Middle East and the United States: History, Politics, and Ideologies*, David W. Lesch and Mark L. Haas, eds., 5th ed. (Boulder, CO: Westview, 2012), pp. 163, 165, respectively.

28. Bronson, *Thicker than Oil*, p. 151.

29. Quoted in Bronson, *Thicker than Oil*, p. 26.

30. Citino, *From Arab Nationalism to OPEC*, p. 97.

his country would "fight [the communist advance] . . . on the basis of our religion."[31] Consistent with these statements, the Saudi government throughout the Cold War spent billions of dollars on pro-Islamist and anticommunist activities. The most important of these included aiding radical Islamist parties in the Afghan resistance during the 1980s (the Saudis even agreed to match dollar for dollar American funding of anti-Soviet activities in Afghanistan), and increasing funding for building thousands of mosques and religious schools around the world. King Fahd (whose reign lasted from 1982 to 2005) issued a directive that "no limit be put on expenditures for the [global] propagation of Islam."[32] Fahd's website bragged that by the early 2000s his government had been responsible for building 200 Islamic colleges, 210 Islamic centers, 1,500 mosques, and 2,000 schools for Muslims. These places of learning and worship that the Saudis funded taught Wahhabi Islam after the Saudi model.[33]

By supporting both Islamist fighters in Afghanistan and the spread of Wahhabi Islam around the world, the Saudis were hoping both to give the Soviets a military defeat and provide an ideological alternative in other states to both communism and the type of Islamism practiced in Iran. The Reagan administration supported both of these goals.[34] The policies also helped to shore up the religious credentials of the Saudi government against Islamist critics at home.[35]

Notice that the Saudi international policies described above support Hypothesis 3A. The Saudis believed that the spread of Wahhabi principles abroad would provide a major help to the security challenged posed by ideological competitors, namely Soviet communism, Iranian Islamism, and Nasserism, and they were willing to spend tens of billions of dollars to achieve this objective. Thus although the Al Saud were largely realist in their policies toward the United States, their actions toward other countries,

31. Quoted in Bronson, *Thicker than Oil*, p. 97.

32. Quoted in Ottaway, *The King's Messenger*, p. 185.

33. Ottaway, *The King's Messenger*, p. 185; see also pp. 177, 184, 211, 265.

34. Bronson, *Thicker than Oil*, chs. 7–9.

35. A key event in the development of Saudi domestic and foreign policies occurred when a group of Islamic radicals seized the Grand Mosque in Mecca in November 1979. The group stated that the Saudi government had strayed from the fundamentals of Islam, including by helping to support the United States with oil exports and allowing Westerners to live in Saudi Arabia. This development was a major challenge to Al Saud rule. The dominant response by the Saudi government was to placate the Wahhabi religious establishment in exchange for increased support and legitimization of the monarchy. Religious leaders were given more authority to enforce strict religious practices at home and more money to propagate Wahhabi Islam abroad, including in Afghanistan. See "Saudi Opposition Group Lists' Insurgents Demands," *MERIP Reports*, No. 85 (February 1980), pp. 16–17; Tim Niblock, *Saudi Arabia: Power, Legitimacy, and Survival* (London: Routledge, 2006), pp. 71, 83–84.

including the Soviet Union and communist sympathizers, were highly ideological.

The importance of shared antipathy to other ideological groups during the Cold War created additional incentives (on top of the realist ones described above) for U.S. leaders' decision to go out of their way not to subvert the Saudi regime. The Saudis' intense ideological hostility to the Soviet Union, for example, meant that ideologies could be a major benefit to U.S. interests during the Cold War *even without a liberal regime change in Saudi Arabia.* This belief significantly reduced the incentives to push for revolution in the kingdom. The Americans thus tried to take advantage of one of the opportunities created in ideologically multipolar systems that I discussed at length in chapter 1: allying with one ideological rival to better defeat a shared ideological enemy. Beginning in the next section, I discuss how ideological variables acquired greater saliency to the U.S.-Saudi relationship after the end of the Cold War, and especially after the September 11 terrorist attacks in the United States.

## INCREASING IDEOLOGICAL HOSTILITIES AFTER THE COLD WAR'S END

The decades after the end of the Cold War brought major new challenges for U.S.-Saudi relations. Important decision makers in both countries both viewed the other state in increasingly threatening terms and called for major distancing in their states' relationship.[36]

A combination of changing geopolitical circumstances and ideological variables explain these developments. The demise of the Soviet Union and the Cold War's end meant that a common power and ideological threat had been eliminated from the international calculations of both Saudi and American leaders. As key forces that had pushed these countries together disappeared, it is not surprising that there was a weakening in the alliance.

This geopolitical and ideological change was important not only on its own terms, but because it helped bring the effects of the huge ideological distance dividing American and Saudi leaders to the surface of their relationship. I argued in the last section that America's and Saudi Arabia's shared economic interests and mutual ideological and geopolitical enmity toward the Soviet Union during the Cold War consistently superseded the centrifugal effects created by their ideological differences. The end of the

36. On the crisis in U.S.-Saudi relations after the Cold War, see Bronson, *Thicker than Oil*, chs. 10–12; Roger Hardy, "Ambivalent Ally: Saudi Arabia and the 'War on Terror,'" in Al-Rasheed, ed., *Kingdom Without Borders*, pp. 99–112.

Cold War, however, allowed these differences to become much more salient to the U.S.-Saudi bilateral relationship. In fact, ideological distances began to have significant effects on U.S.-Saudi relations in the 1990s and 2000s *despite the continuation of major shared economic and security interests* (e.g., the sale and purchase of petroleum and the "dual containment" of Iraq and Iran). Thus, whereas the common threat posed by the Soviet Union was sufficiently powerful to trump the effects of major ideological differences, these other shared material interests, though very important, were much less able to do so in the post–Cold War era. The result was the increasing importance of ideological variables to the U.S.-Saudi alliance.

One example of this tendency was that in the 1990s the very same Saudi policies that U.S. leaders had once encouraged when the Soviet Union was a danger were now perceived as threatening to American interests. American policymakers during the Cold War supported Saudi Arabia's extensive funding of mosque construction and religious schools throughout much of the Middle East, East Africa, and South Asia because the spread of Saudi Arabia's brand of religious conservatism helped roll back Soviet geopolitical influence. By the late 1990s, however, key policymakers in the Clinton administration came to see Saudi funding of religious fighters in Bosnia and Chechnya, as well as support for the Taliban regime in Afghanistan, as contrary to U.S. interests.[37] The Americans were worried in particular about the growing threat of Osama bin Laden's al Qaeda terrorist organization and the role Saudi Arabia played in this development. In a 1999 meeting with Crown Prince Abdullah at the White House, Vice President Al Gore expressed America's concern with bin Laden's fund-raising in Saudi Arabia, much of which was under the guise of Islamic charities. Gore also arranged two meetings with Saudi officials in 1999 and 2000, during which he threatened Saudi Arabia with sanctions if the government did not stop money from the kingdom flowing to fundamentalist groups.[38] It was becoming increasingly clear to U.S. leaders that Saudi religiosity and support of Islamism, which were very useful to America during the Cold War, were by the end of the 1990s becoming dangers.

The Clinton administration was also furious with the Saudis due to a perceived lack of cooperation against Islamic terrorists, especially after attacks in Riyadh in 1995 and Khobar Towers (near Dhahran) in 1996 that killed Americans. In one such expression of anger, Gore reportedly pounded on a table and asked a Saudi representative "what sort of country hid the identity of people who had killed American military personnel stationed in

37. Bronson, "Understanding U.S.-Saudi Relations," pp. 388–89; Ottaway, *The King's Messenger*, pp. 265–66.

38. Timothy L. O'Brien, "U.S. Presses Saudis on Terrorism," *The International Herald Tribune*, August 1, 2003.

that country defending it and its royal family."[39] This anger was publicly shared by numerous high-ranking Clinton officials.[40]

The ideological differences dividing Saudi Arabia and America became particularly important after George W. Bush's election to the presidency. A small but influential group of "neoconservative" advisors (who were concentrated in the Pentagon and the vice president's office) argued that Saudi Arabia's opposition to Israel and resistance to the spread of liberalism in the Middle East endangered core U.S. interests. The result was that "the Bush Administration was prepared to be more openly critical of the Kingdom's internal and external policies than any previous Republican administration," which were views that naturally escalated the Saudis' threat perceptions. Some neoconservatives even asserted that with new sources of oil—most notably from states in the former Soviet Union—it was time for the United States to try to lower the global price of oil in order to "deprive Saudi Arabia of the income it could use to promote anti-American and anti-Israeli policies."[41] Consistent with this view, a perceived key benefit of removing Saddam Hussein from power in Iraq would be that the United States would be less dependent on Saudi oil, thereby allowing America's leaders to put greater pressure on Saudi Arabia for domestic liberalization.[42] According to Richard Clarke, who was a chief counterterrorism adviser on the National Security Council during both the Clinton and George W. Bush administrations, "most" of the core motivations for the decision to attack Iraq in 2003 reflected a "concern with the long-term stability of the House of Saud" on the part of powerful U.S. policymakers (including Vice President Dick Cheney, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, and Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz). Specifically, invading Iraq would allow the United States to create both "an Arab democracy that could serve as a model" to other illiberal countries in the region, including Saudi Arabia, and "another friendly source of oil . . . [to] reduce dependency upon oil from Saudi Arabia."[43]

The September 11 terrorist attacks strengthened the forces pushing the United States and Saudi Arabia apart. One of the most important outcomes of these attacks was that for many U.S. policymakers and analysts, they laid

39. Richard A. Clarke, *Against All Enemies: Inside America's War on Terror* (New York: Free Press, 2004), p. 118.

40. Ottaway, *The King's Messenger*, p. 119.

41. Both quotations are from Martin Sieff, "Sand in Our Eyes: U.S.-Saudi Relations after Iraq," *National Interest*, 76 (Summer 2004), p. 95.

42. Richard S. Dunham, "Where Do the Neocons Go From Here?" *Business Week*, May 12, 2003; Thomas E. Ricks, "Briefing Depicted Saudis as Enemies; Ultimatum Urged to Pentagon Board," *Washington Post*, August 6, 2002.

43. Clarke, *Against All Enemies*, p. 265.

bare the huge ideological differences dividing America from the Saudi kingdom. The fact that fifteen out of the nineteen hijackers on 9/11 were Saudi nationals, combined with the power of Islamic radicalism in the kingdom, convinced many that Saudi Arabia was helping to spur and/or legitimize a major threat to America. The result of this renewed focus on the stark ideological differences between the two regimes was a significant increase in hostility between them. As Saudi scholar Toby Jones explains, the 9/11 attacks and their effects "in many ways . . . established that Saudi Arabia had become more of a liability than an asset to U.S. security."[44]

After September 11, numerous major American newspapers pointed to the oppressiveness and intolerance of Saudi Arabia as a danger to the United States. The *Washington Post* stated that Saudi Arabia's "autocratic system . . . is itself one of the root causes of Islamic extremism." Similarly, the *New York Times* warned that "Saudi Arabia's tolerance for terrorism" was making its relationship with America "untenable and unreliable." The *Wall Street Journal* stated that the U.S.-Saudi alliance "hangs in shreds. U.S. support for the House of Saud [which has "stifled even moderate challenges to its power"] has now yielded Saudi support for those waging war on the U.S. homeland. If a more radical regime is going to take hold in Saudi Arabia [due in part to U.S. pressure for major liberalizing reforms], better to face that fact sooner rather than later."[45]

In July 2002, Laurent Murawiec of the RAND Corporation gave a briefing to the Pentagon Advisory Board, which is a federal advisory committee to the United States Department of Defense, headed at the time by Richard Perle, who had been an Assistant Secretary of Defense in the Ronald Reagan administration. Former Speaker of the House of Representatives Newt Gingrich (R-GA) also sat on the board. In his talk, Murawiec described Saudi Arabia as "the kernel of evil, the prime mover, the most dangerous opponent," saying that "[t]he Saudis are active at every level of the terror chain, from planners to financiers, from cadre to foot-soldier, from ideologist to cheerleader." Murawiec recommended that if Saudi Arabia refused its end its support of terrorism, the United States should seize its oil fields.[46]

The report of the 9/11 Commission, which was issued in 2004, also highlighted ideological variables as a key source of frictions with Saudi Arabia. The commission's members concluded that although they had "found no

44. Jones, "Shifting Sands," p. 167; see also Ayoob and Kosebalaban, "Introduction," pp. 4–5.

45. "Reconsidering Saudi Arabia," *Washington Post*, November 11, 2001; "Reconsidering Saudi Arabia," *New York Times*, October 14, 2001; "The Saudi Contradiction," *Wall Street Journal*, October 30, 2001.

46. Quoted in Ricks, "Briefing Depicted Saudis as Enemies."

evidence that the Saudi government as an institution or senior Saudi officials individually funded [al Qaeda]," this terrorist organization "found fertile fund-raising ground in Saudi Arabia, where extreme religious views are common." Moreover, because "Islamic terrorism" draws on a "long tradition of extreme intolerance" in Wahhabi thought, America had a major security interest in promoting "a relationship about more than oil . . . [that instead included a] commitment to political and economic reform" in Saudi Arabia. These reforms should exhibit an enhanced "interest in greater tolerance and cultural respect."[47]

Numerous politicians, including influential Republican senators Jon Kyl, Mitch McConnell, and Richard Shelby and Democratic senators Joseph Biden, John Kerry, Joe Lieberman, and Charles Schumer also verbally attacked the kingdom.[48] In the 2004 presidential campaign, for example, Democratic nominee Kerry lambasted Saudi Arabia for its support of radicalism and stated that the United States needs to be "serious about confronting the role of Saudi Arabia in financing and providing ideological support of al-Qaeda and other terrorist groups."[49] A year earlier, Kerry had stated that "America cannot afford to hold its nose and play nice with a country whose actions often speak louder than its words when it comes to fighting terrorism. It's time to put the American-Saudi relationship on a frank and balanced basis."[50] Also in 2003, Senators Kyl and Schumer wrote that Wahhabism "seeks our society's destruction."[51] In 2005, the House of Representatives passed two pieces of legislation that were highly critical of the Saudi regime (neither, however, was passed by the Senate). One (House Concurrent Resolution 275) demanded that the kingdom reform its educational system. The House asserted that Saudi education "promotes and encourages extremism . . . fosters intolerance, ignorance, and anti-Semitic, anti-American, and anti-Western views."[52] The other (House Resolution 3057) prohibited America from providing aid to an unreformed Saudi Arabia. Martin Sieff, the chief news analyst for United Press International, summarizes many U.S. leaders' increasing ideological hostility toward Saudi

47. The quotations are from National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States, *The 9/11 Commission Report* (New York: Norton, 2004), pp. 171, 362, 374, respectively.

48. For details and quotations, see International Crisis Group, *Can Saudi Arabia Reform Itself?* (ICC Middle East Report No. 28: Cairo/Brussels, July 14, 2004), p. 8; David Johnston and Philip Shenon, "U.S. Senators Accuse Saudis of Not Helping to Fight Terror," *New York Times*, November, 25, 2002.

49. Quoted in David T. Dumke, "Congress and the Arab Heavyweights: Questioning the Saudi and Egyptian Alliances," *Middle East Today*, Vol. 13, No. 3 (Fall 2006), p. 92.

50. Quoted in International Crisis Group, *Can Saudi Arabia Reform Itself?*, p. 27, note 139.

51. Jon Kyl and Charles Schumer, "Saudi Arabia's Teachers of Terror," *Washington Post*, August 18, 2003.

52. Quoted in Dumke, "Congress and the Arab Heavyweights," p. 89.

Arabia in the 2000s as follows: "Before 9/11, Saudi religious conservatism was seen as preferable to communism . . . But soon after the attacks, Washington policymakers and think-tank intellectuals that had been so comfortable for so long about the Saudis rushed to make up for lost time. Many of them swung like a crazed pendulum from one extreme to the other. Saudi oil wealth was suddenly seen as the core source of all the problems the United States faced."[53]

Although President Bush was generally much more supportive of Saudi Arabia than these views, he too offered ideological criticisms of the Saudis, if often indirectly. In a major policy speech given in November 2003, the president stated that "sixty years of Western nations excusing and accommodating the lack of freedom in the Middle East did nothing to make us safe—because in the long run, stability cannot be purchased at the expense of liberty. As long as the Middle East remains a place where freedom does not flourish, it will remain a place of stagnation, resentment, and violence ready for export. And with the spread of weapons that can bring catastrophic harm to our country and to our friends, it would be reckless to accept the status quo. Therefore, the United States has adopted a new policy, a forward strategy of freedom in the Middle East." While not explicitly referencing Saudi Arabia in this passage, it was clear that the kingdom was part of the ideological problem that Bush was analyzing.[54]

Saudi leaders also distanced themselves from the United States in the 1990s and 2000s, though without as much public vitriol as from the American side. As one Saudi prince put it in 1998, the U.S.-Saudi relationship had been "too close" and even "abnormal," considering the two states were basically ideologically and culturally opposed.[55] When Crown Prince Abdullah assumed many of the policymaking duties after King Fahd's stroke in 1995, he was of the opinion, according to Middle Eastern scholar Rachel Bronson, that "the close U.S.-Saudi embrace seemed only to undermine Saudi domestic stability. Abdullah [as a result] sought to put some daylight between the United States and Saudi Arabia."[56] In 1994, for example, the Saudi government rejected a U.S. request to position more military equipment in the kingdom in order to better counter future threats in the region. The result was a minicrisis after which U.S.-Saudi relations, according to

53. Sieff, "Sand in Our Eyes," p. 96.

54. "President Bush Discusses Freedom in Iraq and Middle East," November 6, 2003, http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2003/11/20031106-2.html. Accessed November 15, 2011.

55. Quoted in Daryl Champion, *The Paradoxical Kingdom: Saudi Arabia and the Momentum of Reform* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), p. 245.

56. Bronson, *Thicker than Oil*, p. 216.

Saudi Ambassador to the United States Prince Bandar bin Sultan, went on "autopilot," with both countries "doing their own thing."[57]

Consistent with this assessment, when the United States in 1996 wanted to initiate air strikes against Iraq for violating the northern no-fly zone and decimating Kurdish opposition forces, Saudi Arabia for the first time withheld support from these operations. The Saudis made the same choice in 1998 when America bombed Iraq for four days to retard its WMD program and leadership capabilities.[58] In 2001, Abdullah placed new, stiff restrictions on operations by the U.S. military in the kingdom. Many believe that the changes were designed to diminish the utility of American bases to the point where the U.S. government pulled its forces out of Saudi Arabia.[59]

On August 27, 2001, Ambassador Bandar relayed to National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice an official message from the crown prince. In it, Abdullah warned that U.S.-Saudi relations were at a "crossroads. It is time for the United States and Saudi Arabia to look at their separate interests. Those governments that don't feel the pulse of the people and respond to it will suffer that fate of the Shah of Iran."[60] Although the Saudi-American alliance was still intact at the beginning of the twenty-first century (e.g., the Saudis throughout the 1990s continued to allow U.S. troops to be stationed in the kingdom, though under increasing restrictions), on the eve of the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks the coalition from the Al Saud perspective was at a self-declared "crossroads." After these attacks, as I discussed above, the relationship deteriorated significantly, especially from American policymakers' perspective.

The end of the conflict with the Soviet Union meant that the level of cooperation between America and Saudi Arabia would inevitably decrease. However, relations between the two countries by the early 2000s, particularly from the American point of view, had reached a level of vitriol and suspicion that cannot be accounted for by pointing to the defeat of a common enemy, especially considering the fact that the two countries continued to possess a number of major common material interests. The effects of ideological differences on U.S.-Saudi relations, which had long been submerged due to the effects of the Cold War and the realist proclivities of both states' leaders, became increasingly important in the new century.

57. Quoted in Ottaway, *The King's Messenger*, p. 115.
58. Bronson, *Thicker than Oil*, p. 220; Bronson, "Understanding U.S.-Saudi Relations," p. 386.
59. Ottaway, *The King's Messenger*, p. 146.
60. Quoted in Bronson, *Thicker than Oil*, p. 238; see also p. 232.

Whereas ideological differences were responsible for major tensions in the U.S.-Saudi relationship in the early 2000s, the reemergence of a shared ideological enemy in 2003 served to stabilize the alliance at a time when it was very vulnerable. It is to this development that I now turn my analysis.

## THE RISE OF A COMMON IDEOLOGICAL ENEMY AND THE BOLSTERING OF THE U.S.-SAUDI ALLIANCE AFTER 2003

Although U.S.-Saudi relations were clearly deteriorating by the time of the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks and continued to do so in their immediate aftermath, by the end of 2003 geopolitical cooperation between the two states had increased significantly. The central events that ultimately led to this reversal were a series of terrorist attacks in Saudi Arabia in 2003 that were perpetrated by Islamist extremists led by Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP). These radicals rejected the religious credentials of the Saudi monarchy and thus wanted to overthrow it. In May 2003, suicide bombers attacked three housing complexes in Riyadh. This was just the beginning of what one analyst called a "full-fledged Islamic insurgency."[61] From May 2003 to March 2004, there were 116 separate terrorist bomb attacks in Saudi Arabia.[62] From May 2003 to February 2005, the Saudi government claimed that 221 people were killed and over 700 wounded in terror attacks and clashes throughout the country.[63] In November and December 2007, the Saudi government arrested nearly 250 people who reportedly had ties to al Qaeda and were planning terrorist attacks in the kingdom.[64] In 2009, a suicide bomber from al Qaeda narrowly missed killing Prince Mohammed bin Nayef, the deputy interior minister. The assault was the first terrorist attack on a member of the royal family in decades.[65]

61. Joshua Teitelbaum, "Terrorist Challenges to Saudi Arabian Internal Security," *Middle East Review of International Affairs*, Vol. 9, No. 3 (September 2005), p. 1.

62. Abdulaziz O. Sager, "Political Opposition in Saudi Arabia," in Aarts and Nonneman, eds., *Saudi Arabia in the Balance*, p. 260.

63. Teitelbaum, "Terrorist Challenges to Saudi Arabian Internal Security," p. 1; Anthony H. Cordesman and Nawaf Obaid, *National Security in Saudi Arabia: Threats, Responses, and Challenges* (Westport, CT: Praeger Security International, 2005), pp. 115–17; John R. Bradley, "Al Qaeda and the House of Saud: Eternal Enemies or Secret Bedfellows?" *Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 28, No. 4 (Autumn 2005), p. 142.

64. Rasheed Abou-Alsamh, "Saudis Arrest 208 in a Sweep to Head Off Terrorist Attacks," *New York Times*, November, 29, 2007; Katherine Zoepf, "Saudis Say 28 Arrested in Foiled Plot to Upset Hajj," *New York Times*, December 24, 2007.

65. Michael Slackman, "Would-be Killer Linked to al Qaeda, Saudis Say," *New York Times*, August 29, 2009.

The major shift in the level of U.S.-Saudi cooperation after the 2003 terror attacks was unmistakable. In December 2002, the Bush administration was so frustrated with Saudi Arabia's counterterrorism efforts that key members of the Bush team met in an attempt to try to overhaul the entire system of coordination between the two countries.[66] However, by April 2004, Cofer Black, the U.S. State Department's coordinator for counterterrorism, stated that he "would cite Saudi Arabia as an excellent example of a nation increasingly focusing its political will to fight terrorism. [Over the last year] Saudi Arabia launched an aggressive, comprehensive and unprecedented campaign to hunt down terrorists, uncover their plots and cut off their sources of funding."[67] According to Black, "the Saudis are a strong ally and are taking unprecedented steps to address an al Qaeda menace that threatens us both."[68] President Bush seconded these views in August 2004 stating that "four years ago . . . Saudi Arabia was fertile ground for terrorist fund raising, [but now] . . . is making raids and arrests."[69]

This analysis does not mean to imply that the Saudis gave the United States no support between September 2001 and May 2003. Both the Saudi government and members of the religious establishment immediately condemned the 9/11 attacks and urged other Muslim-majority countries to do so. Crown Prince Abdullah ordered an increase in oil production to lower the global price of the commodity, thereby providing the American economy a boost during a time of crisis.[70] The Saudis also provided America valuable (if covert) aid during the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, including housing U.S. special forces and allowing extensive use of the Prince Sultan Air Base command and control center.[71]

The key point, as one expert expresses it, is that "Saudi [security] cooperation with the United States . . . [became] far closer [after] . . . Saudi Arabia came under attack in mid-2003."[72] This change went far in reversing the frictions between the two states that had been growing over the previous

66. Bronson, *Thicker than Oil*, pp. 243–45. See also Jeff Gerth and Judith Miller, "Saudi Arabia is Called Slow in Helping Stem the Flow of Cash to Militants," *New York Times*, December 1, 2002.

67. Quoted in Anthony H. Cordesman, "Saudi Arabia: Friend or Foe in the War on Terror?" *Middle East Policy*, Vol. 13, No. 1 (Spring 2006), pp. 32–33.

68. Quoted in David E. Long, "U.S.-Saudi Relations: Evolution, Current Conditions, and Future Prospects," *Mediterranean Quarterly* (Summer 2004), p. 34.

69. Quoted in Bronson, "Understanding U.S.-Saudi Relations," p. 395.

70. Ottaway, *The King's Messenger*, p. 170.

71. Paul Aarts, "Events Versus Trends: The Role of Energy and Security in Sustaining the U.S.-Saudi Relationship," in Aarts and Nonneman, eds., *Saudi Arabia in the Balance*, p. 406; Cordesman, "Saudi Arabia," p. 31.

72. Cordesman, "Saudi Arabia," p. 32; Long, "U.S.-Saudi Relations," pp. 33–34.

decade. After the 2003 terrorist attacks, intelligence sharing with the FBI on terrorist activities increased significantly, and Saudi security forces became much more active in killing and arresting militants.[73] Clerics and other religious leaders were warned to stop inciting hatred and violence, including against America, lest they be banned from preaching (and 2,000 religious leaders were suspended in 2003 alone).[74] The Saudi government also became much more vigilant about preventing monies from ending up in the hands of terrorist groups. The regime shut down a number of Saudi charities that funneled money to radical groups, more carefully monitored other charities that remained open, and passed laws making it harder for Saudi nationals to move money abroad.[75] Perhaps most importantly, the Saudis dedicated a lot of resources to try to delegitimize the ideology of Islamic radicals led by AQAP in favor of more moderate and peaceful interpretations of Islam. I will say much more about these last policies below.

In April 2005, President Bush and King Abdullah agreed to institutionalize further security cooperation between the two countries by creating a "Strategic Dialogue." This agreement required the U.S. Secretary of State and Saudi Foreign Minister to meet every six months and created various subgroups that were to discuss, among other things, counterterrorism; economic cooperation, trade, and investment; cultural and educational exchanges; and energy markets.[76] These and other "task forces" between the two countries, according to Anthony Cordesman in November 2005 testimony before the Senate Committee on the Judiciary, "have become models for international cooperation."[77]

Why did the 2003 terrorist attacks lead to a renewal of the U.S.-Saudi alliance? Realists might attribute this development to the recreation of a common enemy. This analysis is correct as far as it goes. It obscures, however,

73. For details, see Roel Meijer, "The 'Cycle of Contention' and the Limits of Terrorism in Saudi Arabia," in Aarts and Nonneman, eds., *Saudi Arabia in the Balance*, pp. 299–306; Cordesman and Obaid, *National Security in Saudi Arabia*, pp. 115–17; Bruce Reidel and Bilal Y. Saab, "Al Qaeda's Third Front: Saudi Arabia," *Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 31, No. 2 (Spring 2008), p. 38; Ottaway, *The King's Messenger*, p. 207.

74. Cordesman and Obaid, *National Security in Saudi Arabia*, pp. 392–93.

75. Bronson, *Thicker than Oil*, pp. 242, 244, Bronson, "Understanding U.S.-Saudi Relations," p. 390; David Aufhauser, Frank Anderson, David E. Long, Nathaniel Kern, and Hussein Shobokshi, "Saudi Arabia, Enemy or Friend?" *Middle East Policy*, Vol. 11, No. 1 (Spring 2004), pp. 3–5; Salwa Ismail, "Producing 'Reformed Islam': A Saudi Contribution to the U.S. Projects of Global Governance," in Al-Rasheed, ed., *Kingdom Without Borders*, p. 123. Terrorist financing emanating from Saudi Arabia remains, though, a major U.S. concern. See Eric Lichtblau and Eric Schmitt, "Cables Suggest Mideast Resists U.S. on Cutting Terrorists' Cash," *New York Times*, December 5, 2010.

76. United States Department of State, "U.S.-Saudi Strategic Dialogue," May 18, 2006, http://merln.ndu.edu/archivepdf/saudi%20arabia/State/66463.pdf. Accessed November 15, 2011.

77. Cordesman, "Saudi Arabia," p. 33.

the fact that ideological variables were the key factors that led to this common interest.

The 2003 terrorist attacks led to a rejuvenation of the U.S.-Saudi alliance because these events made clear to the Al Saud the power of an ideological enemy that was shared by both Saudi Arabia and the United States. By increasing cooperation with America in order to defeat the domestic Islamist insurgency, the Al Saud were taking advantage of one of the main opportunities that exist in ideologically multipolar systems: aligning with an ideological rival abroad to better defeat a shared ideological enemy at home.

Although the Islamist challenge to the Saudi government first turned violent in the kingdom in a widespread manner in 2003, this rebellion represented an intensification of an ideological movement that had existed in Saudi Arabia for decades. Dissident Islamists (i.e., Islamists who were for the most part not members of governmental agencies and thus not part of the official "religious establishment") who became known as the Sahwa ("awakening") sheikhs offered in the 1980s and especially the 1990s a powerful ideological critique of both the United States and the Al Saud regime. These ideas in key ways formed the foundation of the beliefs of AQAP, which spearheaded the terrorist attacks beginning in 2003. In what follows, I examine the views of these groups of dissident Islamists. My primary objective is to demonstrate that the effects of ideological differences were the key factors responsible for these groups' intense hostility to both America and the Saudi government.

The root source of the Sahwa sheikhs' hostility toward the United States was their belief that Western civilization—with its emphasis on popular sovereignty, individualism, separation of religion and politics, and women's rights—was incompatible with Islam. According, for example, to Sa'd al-Faqih (founder in 1996 of a dissident Islamist group, the Movement for Islamic Reform in Arabia): the Western and Islamic "civilizations subscribe to different frames of reference." He said, "Western culture has sought to obtain self-rule for the individual as an end result. In Islam . . . the end result is establishing and guaranteeing God's dominance over the individual and community as a whole."[78] Others claimed that the "separation between religion and politics" as found in Western countries was antithetical to the "very purpose" of the Islamic State.[79]

The ideological differences between the Western and Islamic worlds, the Sahwa sheikhs believed, would inevitably lead to conflict. Sheikh Safar al-Hawali (a prominent religious scholar who produced pamphlets and taped

78. Quoted in Mamoun Fandy, *Saudi Arabia and the Politics of Dissent* (New York: Palgrave, 1999), p. 157.

79. Quoted in Fandy, *Saudi Arabia and the Politics of Dissent*, p. 51.

speeches that were popular in the kingdom) asserted in the early 1990s that "blood is unavoidable" in a "new phase of the Crusade war."[80] Expanding on this position, Hawali claimed that the "core" of America's diplomatic, economic, and military establishment was designed to "enforce complete Western hegemony on the Islamic world and to eradicate Islamism."[81] Similarly, al-Faqih believed that the "new era of strong Islamic presence on the world arena is likely to lead to a clash between these two forces: Muslims and the West."[82] These Islamists explicitly referred to Samuel Huntington's "clash of civilizations" as an accurate description of international relations.[83]

The threat to Islam from the West took two different forms, both of which are consistent with the book's argument as laid out in Hypothesis 1. The first involved the fear of ideological subversion. Saudi dissident Islamists were obsessed with what they saw as the "corrosive power of Western liberalism," namely the rejection of Islamic values in favor of Western institutions and beliefs.[84] Al-Faqih referred to this problem when he stated that "many Muslims fall in the trap of judging their own societies from a Western frame of reference."[85] Hawali was even more explicit on this subject. To him, Arab governments "have adopted Westernization at their very core."[86] Hawali was particularly scathing of both Saudi "modernizers," who argued for a modern interpretation of Islamic thought, and liberals, who wanted to establish democratic institutions. Because these people were "undermin[ing] the basis of Islamic law," they were nothing more than "agents of Western cultural imperialism."[87]

Salman al-Auda (another noted religious scholar whose lectures circulated widely throughout Saudi Arabia) was just as critical. According to him, Muslims who talk of "Westernization" were in fact advocating "the destruction of Islam."[88] To al-Auda, Saudi modernizers and "secularists" were fifth columns who wanted to join with the West in destroying the "soul of the Muslim umma [community]."[89]

80. Quoted in Fandy, *Saudi Arabia and the Politics of Dissent*, pp. 63–64.

81. Quoted in Fandy, *Saudi Arabia and the Politics of Dissent*, p. 70.

82. Quoted in Fandy, *Saudi Arabia and the Politics of Dissent*, p. 157.

83. See Fandy, *Saudi Arabia and the Politics of Dissent*, pp. 63, 70, 157.

84. Toby Craig Jones, "Religious Revivalism and Its Challenge to the Saudi Regime," in Ayoob and Kosebalaban, eds., *Religion and Politics in Saudi Arabia*, p. 112.

85. Quoted in Fandy, *Saudi Arabia and the Politics of Dissent*, p. 157.

86. Fandy, *Saudi Arabia and the Politics of Dissent*, p. 80.

87. Quoted in Fandy, *Saudi Arabia and the Politics of Dissent*, p. 81.

88. Quoted in Fandy, *Saudi Arabia and the Politics of Dissent*, p. 104.

89. Quoted in Fandy, *Saudi Arabia and the Politics of Dissent*, p. 231. See also ibid., pp. 49, 63, 65–66, 80–81, 86, 104, 117, 231; Uriya Shavit, "Al Qaeda's Saudi Origins: Islamist Ideology," *Middle East Quarterly* (Fall 2006), online pagination, pp. 1–2.

In addition to ideological subversion, the Sahwa sheikhs also believed that Western states were forcibly imposing their culture on Muslim-majority countries through aggressive foreign policies. It is this thinking that pushed dissident Islamists to see the 1990 Gulf War as a watershed moment in Islamic politics;[90] in their eyes, America deployed troops to the Arabian peninsula after Iraq's invasion of Kuwait not to protect Saudi Arabia and defeat Saddam Hussein but to subjugate Islam. The Gulf War, in other words, was nothing more than a pretext for the United States to project greater force into the region to defeat the West's civilizational enemy. Even protecting America's oil interests in the region was not the primary motive for the war. Leading dissident Islamists consistently referred to the ideological motives and effects of the conflict. According to Hawali, "[i]t is not the world against Iraq. It is the West against Islam . . . [I]f Iraq has occupied Kuwait, then America has occupied Saudi Arabia. The real enemy is not Iraq. It is the West . . . While Iraq [is] the enemy of the hour, America and the West [are] the enemies of Judgment Day."[91] To Hawali, the "United States sought the domination of the Muslim world, and the result of such domination would be the triumph of secularism, Christianity, and Judaism over Islam."[92]

Osama bin Laden—who was not a Sahwa sheikh but was an important inspiration behind many of the terrorist attacks in Saudi Arabia beginning in 2003—firmly agreed with these ideas. To him, the conflict with America was the central battle in "a profound struggle between two beliefs: [the way of the Islamists] . . . and the crudely secular way."[93] Bin Laden believed that the huge ideological differences dividing these groups made America an inevitable geopolitical and subversive threat. He stated that America's primary foreign policy goal after the Cold War

90. For analyses detailing the significant increase in dissident Islamist activity after the Gulf War, see Fandy, *Saudi Arabia and the Politics of Dissent*; R. Hrair Dekmejian, "The Rise of Political Islam in Saudi Arabia," *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 48, No. 4 (Autumn 1994), pp. 627–43; and Joshua Teitelbaum, *Holier Than Thou: Saudi Arabia's Islamic Opposition* (Washington, DC: Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 2000).

91. Quoted in Teitelbaum, *Holier Than Thou*, p. 30.

92. Gause, "Official Wahhabism and the Sanctioning of Saudi-U.S. Relations," p. 140. See also Fandy, *Saudi Arabia and the Politics of Dissent*, pp. 61, 67, 69, 71, 193; Teitelbaum, *Holier Than Thou*, p. 29; Shavit, "Al Qaeda's Saudi Origins," p. 4; Meijer, "The 'Cycle of Contention' and the Limits of Terrorism in Saudi Arabia," p. 275. These views would continue during the 2003 war in Iraq. One prominent Sahwa sheikh described this conflict as "another episode in a series of crusades . . . to dominate the Muslim world." Other Sahwa leaders issued a joint declaration that proclaimed that "America's objective in this war is to destroy the Muslim identity of the region and replace it with American culture" (quoted in Al-Rasheed, *Contesting the Saudi State*, pp. 93 and 94, respectively).

93. Osama bin Laden, "Depose the Tyrants" (statement of December 16, 2004), in *Messages to the World: The Statements of Osama bin Laden*, ed. Bruce Lawrence, trans. James Howarth (London: Verso, 2005), pp. 259–60; also p. 265.

was "to get rid of Islam itself."[94] The U.S. also "corrupts religion and the world." Thus "Muslims must prepare with all their might to repel the enemy in military, economic, missionary, and all other areas."[95] To bin Laden, "jihad [against America and its allies] will go on until the Day of Judgment."[96]

Various developments in Saudi Arabia that took place shortly after the American deployment of troops to the kingdom in 1990 further convinced Saudi dissident Islamists that they were under cultural attack from both within and without. In December 1990, a petition signed by forty-three intellectuals asked King Fahd to implement important liberalizing political reforms, including policies that better protected basic human (including women's) rights and established equality before the law regardless of race or gender.[97] Perhaps most alarming from the Sahwa sheikhs' perspective, in November 1990 seventy Saudi women dismissed their drivers and began driving around Riyadh on their own, which was forbidden. Saudi Islamists viewed this protest as a direct result of the presence of U.S. troops in Saudi Arabia (female American soldiers drove trucks around Riyadh), and another example of Saudi "secularists . . . collaborating with U.S. efforts to subvert Saudi society and put an end to the rule of religion."[98] As Mamoun Fandy explains, "according to the Islamists, these acts epitomized the secular conspiracy . . . [These] liberals, almost all of them American-educated Saudis, were emboldened by the presence of the U.S. troops and wanted to further their own interests and undermine the foundation of the society. Supposedly the women wanted to turn Saudi Arabia into America . . . Saudi Islamists felt that if the Americans stayed longer, they would further erode the authority of Islam in the kingdom."[99]

The preceding statements reveal an interconnected and complex relationship among U.S. power, policies, and ideological principles as these variables worked together to shape the Sahwa sheikhs' hostility toward America. These dissident Islamists' animosity toward the United States first became extreme in reaction to particular policies that were made possible by American power, notably the stationing of tens of thousands of U.S. troops in Saudi Arabia. But this projection of American power was interpreted as

94. Osama bin Laden, "The Saudi Regime" (interview of November 1996), in *Messages to the World*, p. 39.

95. Bin Laden, "The Saudi Regime," p. 42.

96. Osama bin Laden, "The Invasion of Arabia" (statement c. 1995/96), in *Messages to the World*, p. 19. See also Osama bin Laden, "From Somalia to Afghanistan" (interview of March 1997), p. 47; and bin Laden, "Depose the Tyrants," p. 274.

97. Richard Dekmejian, "The Liberal Impulse in Saudi Arabia," *The Middle East Journal*, Vol. 57, No. 3 (Summer 2003), p. 403.

98. Teitelbaum, *Holier Than Thou*, p. 30.

99. Fandy, *Saudi Arabia and the Politics of Dissent*, p. 49.

particularly threatening *because of its ideological impact*—the subversive effects that these policies would likely have on Islamic principles and culture. Moreover, many dissident Islamists believed that American leaders adopted aggressive actions in the Islamic world because of their ideological enmity to Islam. Belief in the inevitability of conflict, coupled with intense fears of ideological subversion to liberal principles, implied enduring hostility with the United States regardless of the immediate policy context. As Hawali expressed this point: "America and the West [are] the enemies of Judgment Day."[100] Again, this does not mean that American power was unimportant to Islamists' threat perceptions. To the contrary, Islamists recognized that American power was a key threat to the realization of their ideological objectives (such as the continued Islamization of society) in Saudi Arabia. Consequently, the United States was a much more dangerous foe than other, less powerful liberal states.

Critical for the evolution of the Saudi-American alliance was the fact that Saudi dissident Islamists' ideological enmity was not directed at the United States alone. Their ideological animosity toward the Al Saud regime was also fierce. These Islamists believed that the Al Saud had not only failed to protect and advance the cause of Islam in the post–Cold War period but had been accomplices to Islam's weakening at the hands of Western cultural imperialism. Charges that the Saudi government was facilitating ideological subversion were particularly severe. The most frequent charge leveled at the government was that religion was becoming increasingly less important to political decision making other than to legitimate the policies of the government. As one Islamist activist put it, "the fact that the various [Saudi government] ministries do not consult the 'ulama in conducting their policy could eventually lead to separation between politics and religion, which defeats the very purpose of the establishment of the Islamic State."[101] When the government did consult established religious leaders, dissident Islamists believed that these individuals frequently "twist[ed] Islamic teachings to support the policies of the state."[102] Al-Faqih, for example, complained that "almost all the fatwas issued by the 'ulama at times of crisis supported the state."[103]

Saudi Arabia's alliance with the United States—especially inviting American soldiers to station there after Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait—clearly demonstrated the regime's corruption in the minds of many Islamists by

100. Quoted in Teitelbaum, *Holier Than Thou*, p. 30.

101. Quoted in Fandy, *Saudi Arabia and the Politics of Dissent*, p. 51.

102. Quoted in Fandy, *Saudi Arabia and the Politics of Dissent*, p. 4.

103. Quoted in Fandy, *Saudi Arabia and the Politics of Dissent*, p. 168. These were not unfair criticisms, since they reflect the domestic bargain between the Al Saud and the religious establishment described earlier.

facilitating America's efforts at ideological exportation. Dissident Islamists repeatedly stated that alliances with non-Muslim majority countries, let alone invitations to such states to station soldiers on Islamic holy land, were gross violations of Islamic law. Such actions only aided an enemy whose primary international goal was to subjugate Islam.[104]

Dissident Islamists' extremely hostile reactions to the Gulf War demonstrate very clearly the importance of ideological variables to individuals' threat perceptions. The American military operations were designed to liberate one Muslim-majority country (Kuwait) from a brutal occupation and protect another (Saudi Arabia) from a similar attack. The Al Saud were both sufficiently worried about the danger posed by Iraq and sufficiently trusting of U.S. intentions that they *invited* America to deploy troops into the kingdom to help advance their common interests. Dissident Saudi Islamists clearly felt much more threatened by the United States than did the Al Saud. Different ideological beliefs and political objectives led these groups to view the same actions in very different ways.

Although some of the leaders of the Sahwa movement had personally ceased their challenge to the Saudi government around the turn of the century due to a combination of cooptation and coercion,[105] the ideological critique of the state lived on and was even amplified in the 2000s, primarily by al Qaeda cells in the kingdom. Various Saudi princes, members of the religious establishment, and Saudi liberals all accused the Sahwa sheikhs of laying the ideological foundation for the terrorist attacks on the United States and Saudi Arabia in the 2000s.[106] This was not an inaccurate accusation. According to the scholar of Saudi politics Madawi Al-Rasheed, the extremist groups associated with AQAP "sprung out of the awakening" (the Sahwa movement). Indeed, the "Jihadi trend [led by al Qaeda and its affiliates] is often seen as the logical conclusion of the Sahwa movement."[107] Consistent with this analysis, a central objective of the first leader of AQAP, Yusuf al-Uyairi, was "to draw on and elaborate the template that already existed [as developed by the Sahwa sheikhs], which regarded the Muslim world as entangled in an apocalyptic struggle with the USA and the rest of the West," and Saudi Arabia

104. See Fandy, *Saudi Arabia and the Politics of Dissent*, pp. 86–87, 135–36, 172; Teitelbaum, *Holier Than Thou*, pp. 32, 58–59.

105. For details, see Toby Craig Jones, "The Clerics, the Sahwa and the Saudi State," *Strategic Insights*, Vol. 4, No 3 (March 2005).

106. Al-Rasheed, *Contesting the Saudi State*, pp. 77–78

107. Al-Rasheed, *Contesting the Saudi State*, pp. 82 and 137, respectively. See also pp. 82, 89–91.

as "corrupted" by its political and economic relations with America.[108] Leaders of AQAP and similar groups thus saw themselves as "the real heirs of Sahwa, carrying its banner."[109]

Al Qaeda leaders took the ideological attack on the Saudi government further than most Sahwa sheiks. To al-Uyairi, for example, all contact with Western countries "automatically leads to compromises of one's religion and one's principles." This ideological corruption "applies to all internal forces [including the Saudi government] that in one way or another are willing to collaborate with the West."[110] Al Qaeda leaders even employed the weapon of *takfir*, accusing the Saudi government of unbelief and thus being an infidel power.[111] This is one of the most damning charges that can be made against any Muslim, and is especially so for a regime that proclaimed to be a defender of the Muslim faith. In a 2004 statement, Osama bin Laden claimed that the Al Saud regime was "clearly beyond the pale of Islam, allying . . . with infidel America . . . and making itself an equal to God by legislating on what is or is not permissible without consulting God."[112] Because "authority cannot be given to an infidel . . . it is obligatory to remove [the Saudi regime] by force."[113] To bin Laden, the Al Saud were "part of an international blasphemous alliance whose main objective is to enslave Muslims."[114]

Saudi leaders understood full well that the powerful challenge posed by AQAP, which had built on and intensified the ideas of the Sahwa, was at heart an ideological one. After the 2003 attacks in the kingdom, many Saudi decision makers increasingly talked of the need to destroy ideological "extremism" and "radicalism."[115] Prince Bandar, for example, stated in June 2004 that Saudi Arabia was at "war" with an "ideology [of] . . . deviants" in which "everything that this state and this people have accomplished" was at

108. Roel Meijer, "Yusuf Al-Uyairi and the Transnationalisation of Saudi Jihadism," in Al-Rasheed, ed., *Kingdom Without Borders*, p. 230

109. Al-Rasheed, *Contesting the Saudi State*, p. 138.

110. Meijer, "Yusuf Al-Uyairi and the Transnationalisation of Saudi Jihadism," pp. 231–32.

111. Teitelbaum, *Holier Than Thou*, p. 38; Fandy, *Saudi Arabia and the Politics of Dissent*, p. 168; Meijer, "The 'Cycle of Contention' and the Limits of Terrorism in Saudi Arabia," pp. 275, 277–78.

112. Bin Laden, "Depose the Tyrants," p. 248.

113. Bin Laden, "Depose the Tyrants," p. 260; also p. 273.

114. Al-Rasheed, *Contesting the Saudi State*, p. 115.

115. This does not mean that the Al Saud wanted to destroy Wahhabism. Instead, they wanted both to eliminate violent components of this ideology and its offshoots and to reaffirm their dominance over religious authorities. On this last point, Prince Turki al-Faisal argued in a widely read newspaper article that "those responsible for affairs of state are the rulers," while "[religious] scholars only act in an advisory capacity." Prince Talal bin Abdel Aziz supported this view by challenging the "very confusing" claim that state affairs should be decided jointly by religious and political leaders (both quotations from Bronson, *Thicker than Oil*, p. 242).

stake.[116] Prince Turki al-Faisal (who was at the time the head of Saudi Arabia's intelligence agency and later ambassador to the United States) supported this position when he claimed that merely killing terrorists would not be sufficient to defeat them. Instead, Saudi Arabia had to destroy the ideology that led to such violence. Thus the state had to combat "the ideas that made them terrorists."[117] Although the ideological threat to the Al Saud regime posed by dissident Islamists had existed throughout the post–Cold War period, the 2003 terrorist attacks convinced many Saudi policymakers that radical Islamist ideology was a much greater domestic threat than heretofore believed. Saudi leaders even described these attacks as a "wake-up call" about the dangers posed by dissident Islamists.[118]

Once the leaders of the Saudi government became fully aware of the danger posed by the ideological challenge at home, security cooperation with the United States increased significantly in order to defeat their shared enemy. Prince Salman bin Abdul Aziz, governor of Riyadh, expressed precisely this logic when he stated that "there is a terrorist challenge and all countries are facing it: ourselves just as much as the British, as the Americans, or as the Italians. Everyone, whether Arab or not, is threatened." This common threat helped make Saudi Arabia and the United States "very closely linked to one another."[119] Dissident Islamists' intense, ideologically based enmity toward both the United States and the Saudi regime thus resuscitated the Saudi-American alliance at its weakest point. Shared ideological threats were, in short, critical to the continuation of the alliance among otherwise ideological rivals.

116. Quoted in Bronson, *Thicker than Oil*, p. 242.

117. Quoted in Michaela Prokop, "The War of Ideas: Education in Saudi Arabia," in Aarts and Nonneman, eds., *Saudi Arabia in the Balance*, p. 58.

118. Quoted in Rachel Bronson, "Rethinking Religion: The Legacy of the U.S.-Saudi Relationship," *Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 28, No. 4 (Autumn 2005), p. 125. An exchange between the American ambassador to Pakistan, Robert Oakley, and Prince Turki al-Faisal in the early 1990s points to Saudi leaders' lack of great concern about dissident Islamists in these years. Oakley asked Turki if he was worried about Arab Islamic radicals operating in Afghanistan, since these individuals hated both the United States and Saudi Arabia and were likely to return eventually to the Middle East. Turki responded that he was concerned, but few in Saudi Arabia at this time agreed with him (Bronson, *Thicker than Oil*, p. 222). Even Interior Minister Nayef bin Abdul Aziz, who frequently pointed to security dangers as a means of justifying domestic oppression, indicated in the fall of 2002 that the threats by dissident Islamists in Saudi Arabia were small (Toby Jones, "Seeking a 'Social Contract' for Saudi Arabia," *Middle East Report*, No. 228 [Autumn 2003], pp. 47–48). Former National Security Council member Richard Clarke claims that for several years prior to 9/11, the United States provided the Saudi government information about the domestic threat posed by al Qaeda in the kingdom, but that these warnings were met with "lethargy . . . reluctance . . . [and] denial" (Clarke, *Against All Enemies*, p. 281).

119. Quoted in Corriere della Sera, "'Liberal' Riyadh Governor Expects Expansion of Reform," BBC Monitoring Middle East, August 9, 2005.

## DOMESTIC LIBERALIZATION IN SAUDI ARABIA AFTER 2003

Tightening the alliance with the United States was not the only strategy the Saudi government used in order to defeat the Islamist insurgency at home. Saudi leaders after 2003 also implemented a number of liberalizing reforms in a variety of areas. These changes are important for our purposes for two main reasons. First, they confirm the claim that key leaders in the Al Saud family understood the terrorist challenge in the 2000s to be largely an ideological one. It was not sufficient just to crush the dissidents physically. Instead, the ideas behind this movement had to be discredited and defused, and a certain degree of liberalization was a way to achieve this. As Prince Turki expressed this point: "No matter how much the United States or Great Britain or France or China or Russia want to combat the ideological propositions of al Qaeda, only Muslim countries can really face up to these ideological challenges [and promote] . . . an alternative ideology that has stuck to the traditional teachings of Islam . . . as a religion that is inclusive, not exclusive; a religion that is tolerant, not intolerant."[120] Again, this does not mean that the Al Saud were liberals or that they intended to end their alliance with Wahhabi clerics. The point instead is simply that some liberalizing changes were part of the efforts to defeat a powerful ideological threat.

Second, studying the domestic liberalization in Saudi Arabia in the 2000s and the supporters of these policies allows an examination of one of the key indicators of ideologies' international importance: variations in the international perceptions and policies according to factional-ideological beliefs. We do not understand enough about the inner workings of the Al Saud ruling circles to know with great precision the domestic and international preferences of individual princes. We do know, however, these preferences for various politically active groups at the societal level. As we shall see, those Saudi social groups that were most supportive of domestic liberalization were also the most supportive of bilateral ties with the United States, especially compared to other ideological factions in the kingdom (e.g., dissident Islamists).

The steps toward domestic liberalization in Saudi Arabia in the wake of the 2003 terrorist attacks were unmistakable, even if these changes were slow, often contradictory as the Saudis tried to proceed with reforms without provoking too strong a backlash from conservative forces, and always controlled from above. As the scholar Nimrod Raphaeli explains, the terrorist attacks created "a new sense of urgency to the

120. Quoted in Jonathan Curiel, "Prince Turki al-Faisal Goes to Washington," *San Francisco Chronicle,* December 10, 2006.

demands for a comprehensive change in the Saudi polity, economy, and society."[121] Particularly important in this process were a series of measures adopted by the Saudi government that were designed to increase respect for pluralism, tolerance, and rights. For example, a number of prominent Saudi leaders—including Prince Khaled al-Faisal (governor of Asir and president of the Foundation of Arab Thought), Sheikh Saleh Al-Asheikh (Minister of Islamic Affairs, Endowments, Call and Guidance), Education Minister Mohammad al-Rasheed, and Prince Turki al-Faisal—publicly criticized Saudi educational policies for promoting intolerant forms of Islam and called for major overhauls of the system.[122] Consistent with these criticisms, there was after 2003 a noticeable effort to try to ensure that the Islam being taught in Saudi Arabia's schools did a better job of emphasizing peace and tolerance. Political leaders stripped religious authorities of some of their power, and changed textbooks and curricula to excise some of the more extremist views and to increase emphasis on technological and scientific training.[123] The Saudi government (according to official estimates) also suspended or fired thousands of religious leaders for teaching extreme views of Islam. In 2003, over 2,000 imams, preachers, and muezzins (the criers who call the faithful to prayer) were suspended for teaching intolerance, many of whom were placed in "re-education" programs to ensure the adoption of more moderate interpretations of Islam.[124] From 2006 to 2008, roughly 1,000 clerics were fired for the same reasons, and 40,000 were required to attend retraining programmes.[125]

In 2005, Saudi political leaders launched a public awareness campaign designed to inform the wider public that terrorism and extremism were under all conditions antithetical to Islam. The campaign included documentaries

121. Nimrod Raphaeli, "Demands for Reforms in Saudi Arabia," *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 41, No. 4 (July 2005), p. 517. See also: Andrzej Kapiszewski, "Saudi Arabia: Steps Toward Democratization or Reconfiguration of Authoritarianism?" *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, Vol. 41, No. 5/6 (October–December 2006), p. 468.

122. Prokop, "The War of Ideas," pp. 58, 72; Cordesman and Obaid, *National Security in Saudi Arabia*, p. 386. "Arabs Must Think for Themselves: Prince Khaled," *Arab News*, December 3, 2003; Nina Shea, "Textbook Intolerance," *The Record* (Bergen County, NJ), May 28, 2006.

123. Cordesman and Obaid, *National Security in Saudi Arabia*, p. 387; F. Gregory Gause, III, "Saudi Arabia at a Crossroads? Notes from a Recent Visit," *Strategic Insights*, Vol. 3, No. 2 (February 2004), p. 3. Although hate speech toward other religions remained in Saudi textbooks (see Shea, "Textbook Intolerance"), Saudi reformers (at the societal level) claimed that the books were "still a far cry from what they were" as recently as 2001 (Hassan Fattah, "Don't Be Friends with Christians or Jews, Saudi Texts Say," *New York Times*, May 24, 2006; also Ismail, "Producing 'Reformed Islam,'" pp. 124–25).

124. Cordesman and Obaid, *National Security in Saudi Arabia*, p. 386.

125. Damien McElroy, "Retraining for Saudi Clerics in Purge on Extremism," *Daily Telegraph* (London), March 22, 2008.

and interview programs on television, short films, advertisements on billboards and television, seminars at mosques and schools, and cartoons for children.[126]

In December 2006, the Saudi government announced the creation of a major new antiterrorism campaign that targeted schoolchildren in the Mecca region. A number of activities, including lectures by experts, meetings with security officers, and radio programs, were aimed at preventing boys and girls from being attracted to "deviant thoughts and extremist ideologies."[127]

The most dramatic improvement of Saudi Arabia's education system occurred at the university level, where modernization became a priority. The government, for example, dedicated major resources to hiring foreign consultants for oversight and quality control of the country's changing higher education system.[128] As part of these efforts, in 2008 Saudi Arabia contracted with Stanford, Berkeley, and the University of Texas for over $25 million each to provide curricular, research, and faculty-hiring help at the newly created King Abdullah University of Science and Technology (KAUST).[129] KAUST is the first of several new universities that are scheduled to be built, all of which will focus not on religious studies but on applied sciences. KAUST will become the kingdom's first coed university, and others plan to be so as well.[130]

KAUST is related to a much larger project for technological advancement and social liberalization in Saudi Arabia, the building of entire cities (four are currently being developed with estimated populations of two million each) based on the model of "special economic zones" that have flourished in places like China. The cities are intended to be economically modern and socially diverse, places where the sexes intermingle and religious restrictions hold much less sway.[131]

Another dimension of key Saudi leaders' efforts to move their society in a more moderate direction involved the sponsorship of a series of "National Dialogues" that were explicitly dedicated to tolerance. The primary topics

126. Cordesman, "Saudi Arabia," pp. 36–27.

127. "Saudi Daily Reports 'Anti-terror Drive' at Mecca Schools," BBC Monitoring Middle East, December 18, 2006.

128. Michael Slackman, "The (Not So) Eagerly Modern Saudi," *New York Times*, May 6, 2007.

129. Rehab Al Mahfudh, "Saudi Arabia Plans to Advance its Educational System," *Global Insight*, April 3, 2008; Ralph K. M. Haurwitz, "UT to Design Science Classes at Saudi School," *Austin American-Statesman*, March 6, 2008.

130. Zvika Krieger, "Saudi Higher Education Reforms Raise Questions," *The Daily Star* (Lebanon), January 18, 2008.

131. Nicolai Ouroussoff, "Saudi Urban Projects are a Window to Modernity," *New York Times*, December 12, 2010.

examined in the dialogues included "extremism and moderation," "the rights and duties of women," globalization, and education reform. Included as participants in the dialogues were such marginalized and oppressed groups as Shiites, Sufis, and women. According to Gregory Gause, the National Dialogues were "the most tangible evidence yet that the government is committed to fostering a more pluralistic and tolerant notion of what it means to be a Saudi citizen, and to allow more open debate in the country."[132]

The Saudi government implemented a number of policy changes that were consistent with the spirit of the recommendations resulting from the dialogues, including actions that improved the rights of religious minorities and women. According to one scholar's assessment (writing in 2009) on the former subject: "Although 'officially' Islam is the only religion that can be freely practiced in Saudi Arabia today, unofficially, religious freedom is rising quietly, yet slowly. Evidence includes the increased number of people both within and outside the political and religious establishment who identify themselves as 'anti-Wahhabis,' official recognition of law schools other than the Hanbali *madhhab* [Saudi Arabia's school of religious jurisprudence], official recognition of the Shia population and expansion of Shia rights to practice their religion . . . and the apparent incremental presence and recognition of Christianity."[133]

Women's rights also took important steps forward. In December 2001, the Interior Ministry (over the objections of ideological hard-liners) began issuing identity cards to women, and this practice accelerated after 2003.[134] The cards showed women's unveiled faces. In the past, women were named, but not depicted, on cards as dependents of their father or husbands. This change gave women greater independence for actions for which a photo identification is required, including financial operations and international travel.[135] In 2003, women were allowed to obtain commercial licenses in their own names, without the need for permission from their male guardians.[136] In September 2004, Saudi Arabia signed the Convention on the

132. Gause, "Saudi Arabia at a Crossroads?," p. 2.

133. Natana J. DeLong-Bas, "Wahhabism and the Question of Religious Tolerance," in Ayoob and Kosebalaban, eds., *Religion and Politics in Saudi Arabia*, pp. 16–17; see also ibid., pp. 20–21 (fns. 23–25). This last development included a document published by the Ministry of Islamic Affairs in 2004 that reasserted "Islam's broad respect for [Christianity and Judaism and called for] formal dialogue with them because of their shared beliefs" (ibid., p. 17).

134. Cordesman and Obaid, *National Security in Saudi Arabia*, p. 385; Rachel Bronson and Isabel Coleman, "The Kingdom's Clock," *Foreign Policy*, Vol. 156 (September/October 2006), p. 6.

135. Hassan M. Fattah, "Saudi Women See Changes, and Reasons to Expect More," *New York Times*, December 21, 2005.

136. Kapiszewski, "Saudi Arabia," p. 471.

Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.[137] In 2005, two women were elected to the twelve-member board of directors of the Jidda Chamber of Commerce. This was the first time that women were elected to, or even allowed to run for, such a visible post in the kingdom.[138] In 2006, King Abdullah issued a royal decree that women must be encouraged to work in all fields, and by April 2007, 4,000 women had registered with the Riyadh Chamber of Commerce. In 2007, women for the first time were permitted to enroll in law school.[139] After becoming king, Abdullah included women as part of his official delegations during international state visits, which further highlighted women's talents and independence.[140] He also appeared in newspaper photographs alongside women with unveiled faces, which was unthinkable until recently. In 2009, the king appointed a woman to be deputy minister of education, the highest public office ever held by a woman.[141] In December 2009, the head of Mecca's branch of the Committee for the Propagation of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice caused a sensation when he told a newspaper that gender mixing was "part of normal life."[142] In 2011, the Saudi government announced that women will have the right to vote and run in the municipal elections scheduled for 2015.

Despite such changes and commitments, Saudi Arabia remains a highly repressive state. The key points, however, are that the country made noteworthy progress in implementing liberalizing reforms after 2003 that made it a more tolerant and open country than it had been, and that one of the main objectives of these changes was to address the ideological foundations of the terrorist threat. Saudi reforms, in the words of Prince Turki, were designed to combat "the ideas that made them terrorists."[143]

Examining the foreign policy preferences of those individuals who were most supportive of domestic liberalization in Saudi Arabia also allows us to see if there was a relationship between domestic-ideological objectives and international perceptions and polices. Because we do not know enough about the inner decision-making process of the Al Saud, we cannot perform this test at the elite level. We can, however, engage in this analysis for societal groups who were politically active in the 1990s and 2000s.

137. Cordesman and Obaid, *National Security in Saudi Arabia*, pp. 381–84.

138. Fattah, "Saudi Women See Changes."

139. Karen Elliot House, "For Saudi Women, a Whiff of Change," *Wall Street Journal*, April 9, 2007.

140. Kapiszewski, "Saudi Arabia," pp. 471–72.

141. Jafar Alshayeb, "Women's Rights Gain Focus in Saudi Arabia," *Arab Reform Bulletin*, May 12, 2010; Katherine Zoepf, "In Saudi Arabia, Talk of Women's Rights Exposes a Divide," *New York Times*, May 31, 2009.

142. Quoted in Zoepf, "In Saudi Arabia, Talk of Women's Rights Exposes a Divide."

143. Quoted in Prokop, "The War of Ideas," p. 58.

The 1990s in Saudi Arabia witnessed not only the rise to prominence of dissident Islamists, but also the increasing social and political activism of a liberalizing reform movement. Like reformers in Iran, Saudi liberalizers or reformers did not want to replicate Western liberal regimes, but they did seek the liberalization of political institutions and the enhanced protection of rights. Saudi reformers, though, frequently justified these objectives, as well as their calls for social and political justice, in specifically Islamic terms (and many wanted clergy to remain in positions of political influence). This combination of political goals and justifications for them has led some scholars to label Saudi reformers as an example of "Islamo-liberals" (see chapter 1 for more details on this group).[144] The key point for our purposes is that Saudi reformers' ideological objectives and Western liberalism were "ideologically compatible on . . . important grounds, in spite of some equally important differences."[145] The result was a significant shrinkage in the ideological distance dividing Saudi liberalizers and Western regimes compared with other ideological groups in Saudi Arabia.

Saudi reformers called for such major political changes as the separation of governmental powers, the implementation of the rule of law, equal rights for all citizens, the creation of an elected national parliament, and freedom of speech and assembly.[146] They also advocated important liberalizing social reforms, including with regard to Islam. Reformers criticized Wahhabism as too dogmatic and intolerant and believed it to be a major cause of political violence, including terrorism. They also called for a dynamic interpretation of Islam that both historicized the writings in the Quran and took into account contemporary developments and values. Tolerance of different religions and interpretations of Islam was considered particularly important.

Saudi reformers' domestic objectives created an affinity with Western states. Indeed, many of these individuals looked explicitly to the West for ideological guidance and inspiration. For example, Abd al-Aziz al-Qasim (a former judge at the High Court in Riyadh and subsequently a political

144. Stéphane Lacroix, "Between Islamists and Liberals: Saudi Arabia's New 'Islamo-Liberal' Reformists," *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 58, No. 3 (Summer 2004), pp. 345–65; and Stéphane Lacroix, "Islamo-Liberal Politics in Saudi Arabia," in Aarts and Nonneman, eds., *Saudi Arabia in the Balance*, pp. 35–56.

145. Toby Craig Jones, personal correspondence, February 12, 2009.

146. Saudi liberalizers' domestic preferences are revealed by examining their demands in various reform petitions made to the Al Saud, most notably ones of December 1990 (signed by forty-three people); January 2003 ("A Vision for the Present and Future of the Nation," signed by 104); September 2003 ("In Defense of the Nation," signed by 300); April 2003 ("Partners in One Nation," signed by 450 Shia men and women); and two in December 2003 ("National Call: Leadership and People Together . . . Institutional Reform First"; and a women's rights petition, signed by 300). For details, see Raphaeli, "Demands for Reforms in Saudi Arabia," pp. 517–32; Dekmejian, "The Liberal Impulse in Saudi Arabia"; Lacroix, "Between Islamists and Liberals," pp. 345–65.

activist) was critical of "the contemporary Islamist movements which categorically reject Western political systems. . . . [W]hile these systems shouldn't be adopted in their current form, they should nonetheless constitute a source of inspiration for Muslim reformers."[147]

Mansur al-Nuqaydan (a popular freelance journalist) called for a "revolution" in Islamic thought based on a new, "enlightened understanding of the Shari'a . . . taking into account the considerable evolutions and winds of change that blow upon nations and cultures." In order to achieve this goal, Nuqaydan believed that Islam had much to learn from the evolution of Christian thought in the West. Thus, he writes, "we need a new Islam," and "Islam needs a Lutheran reform."[148]

Sheikh Hassan al-Saffar, the spiritual leader of the Saudi Shia Reform Movement, was perhaps the most consistent of all Saudi reformers in his views of the West as an inspiration for his group's domestic objectives.[149] According to him, "the West's economic order, its political institutions, and its scientific institutions . . . are things [from which] we need to learn."[150] Al-Saffar explicitly pointed to the United States as a model of political and moral achievement, stating that in America "there is an abundance of civil organizations [and] institutions . . . which solve societal problems and ills."[151] He also cited the ratification of the U.S. Constitution as an important milestone in the protection of human rights. Indeed, the Western "great powers" were "forerunners when it comes to public promotion, discussion, and production of slogans on the issue of human rights and their protection."[152]

147. Lacroix, "Between Islamists and Liberals," p. 347.

148. Quoted in Lacroix, "Between Islamists and Liberals," p. 353.

149. According to Fandy, for al-Saffar "the differences between Muslims and Westerners [on political issues] are minimal, and Muslim perceptions of the gap between themselves and the West are the result of media manipulation rather than experience or knowledge" (Fandy, *Saudi Arabia and the Politics of Dissent*, pp. 202–03).

150. Quoted in Fandy, *Saudi Arabia and the Politics of Dissent*, p. 203.

151. Quoted in Fandy, *Saudi Arabia and the Politics of Dissent*, p. 212.

152. Quoted in Fandy, *Saudi Arabia and the Politics of Dissent*, pp. 219–20. The transformation of the domestic and international views of key Saudi Shias was both remarkable and in keeping with the predictions of this book. From roughly 1975 to 1985, many of the most politically active Saudi Shias were ideological militants. They wanted to overthrow the "un-Islamic" Saudi regime and replace it with an "ideologically pure" state on the model of the Islamic Republic of Iran. They also wanted to minimize U.S. influence in Saudi Arabia. By 1990, however, political Shias—led by al-Saffar—had moved in a much more liberal direction based on the ideas of Iranian reformer Abdol Karim Soroush. A related transformation occurred in views of Western states. Instead of seeing Western states as inevitable enemies, al-Saffar and his supporters after 1990 hoped that their dedication to pluralism and human rights would appeal to Western audiences and gain their sympathy and support. Al-Saffar stated that Saudis' perceptions of the threats posed by the West should be reduced because they were based on false views (Fandy, *Saudi Arabia and the Politics of Dissent*, pp. 198–203).

Given Saudi reformers' views of Western countries as a source of ideological inspiration, it is only natural that this position resulted in increased sympathy and support for these states. Most notably, many Saudi reformers believed that Western states' power and policies could benefit their interests by spurring domestic liberalization in Saudi Arabia. It is not a coincidence that the periods in which reformers were most active in pushing for domestic change were after operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm in 1990 and 1991, respectively, and after the September 11 terrorist attacks. Saudi reformers used the significant increases in U.S. presence in the Middle East after these events to advance their domestic objectives.[153] They believed, for example, that the increased international media attention that accompanied the Gulf War and its aftermath, as well as the gender equality exhibited in the U.S. military, made the early 1990s a propitious time to push for liberalization. Thus in December 1990, forty-three liberals signed and presented to the king a petition that called for better protection of human rights and the liberalization of Saudi institutions. In November of that year, seventy women protested in Riyadh calling for the right to drive. "Western-leaning Saudi reformers," as Rachel Bronson summarizes, "hoped that the international spotlight focused on the kingdom [that resulted from the Gulf War] would catalyze Saudi Arabia toward a more modern political structure, one in which women were more visible and laws applied equally across the population."[154]

Notice how differently Saudi reformers and dissident Islamists viewed American policies in this instance. Whereas Islamists saw America's presence in the Middle East as a mortal threat to their domestic objectives, liberals saw the same outcome as a benefit to their goals. The same U.S. actions resulted in very different threat perceptions depending on different groups' ideological beliefs.

Similar dynamics took place after the September 11 terrorist attacks. One outcome of these events was a significant increase in international attention—led by the United States—on Islamic radicalism in Saudi Arabia and the international dangers it created. Saudi reformers looked with favor on this development, since it benefited their domestic interests by discrediting their

153. Dekmejian, "The Liberal Impulse in Saudi Arabia"; Lacroix, "Between Islamists and Liberals"; Lacroix, "Islamo-Liberal Politics in Saudi Arabia." According to As'ad AbuKhalil, "U.S. foreign policy has had a potent impact on Saudi Arabia. The Gulf War of 1991 produced an ideological polarization in the kingdom: it split the core opposition into liberal and fundamentalist fronts" (AbuKhalil, *The Battle for Saudi Arabia*, p. 167).

154. Bronson, *Thicker than Oil*, p. 210; also Dekmejian, "The Liberal Impulse in Saudi Arabia," pp. 402–03. Saudi dissident Islamists, in other words, were correct in their claims (described above) that American policies during the Gulf War were catalyzing indigenous "subversive" forces (i.e., reformers).

Islamist rivals. As Richard Dekmejian explains, the aftermath of September 11 provided Saudi "Liberals greater margin to argue their case and to criticize the Islamists for bringing harm to the Kingdom by their support of the Taliban and Al Qa'ida."[155] Thus, according to Stéphane Lacroix, "there is no doubt that the tragic events of September 11, 2001 served as something of a catalyst for [Saudi] . . . reformism. Prior to that date, these intellectuals expressed their views informally in private salons, Internet forums and articles in the press. But in the wake of the attacks, they took advantage of the new political climate prevalent in the Kingdom to create a wider consensus on their ideas and to formalize their aspirations into political manifestos and petitions."[156] Saudi female reformers have credited 9/11 and its aftermath with giving the Al Saud "reason to push back against some of the more reactionary practices imposed by the powerful clergy."[157]

There were limits, however, to Saudi reformers' support for the United States. These individuals were fierce critics of America's Middle Eastern policies, especially the 2003 Iraq War and its mostly one-sided support of Israel.[158] Saudi reformers even argued that these actions hindered their domestic objectives by seemingly validating Islamists' claims of a civilizational conflict between Islam and the West. For example, according to Hamza al-Mozainy, a professor of linguistics and a columnist who lobbied for education reform, "What makes changing the curriculum so difficult is that the people are living in a middle of a conflict. . . . As we discuss change, [Islamists] say, 'Look what America is doing to us, look what Israel is doing.'"[159] Many Saudi reformers feared associating too closely with the United States lest they be tainted with the widespread popular ill will directed at America due largely to its Iraqi and Israeli policies.[160]

Although Saudi reformers' sympathy for the United States was significantly diminished by widespread resentment for particular American actions, this finding should not obscure the fact that these individuals tended

155. Dekmejian, "The Liberal Impulse in Saudi Arabia," p. 409, also p. 404. See also Lacroix, "Islamo-Liberal Politics in Saudi Arabia," p. 47.

156. Lacroix, "Between Islamists and Liberals," p. 346.

157. Fattah, "Saudi Women See Changes."

158. See, for example, Madawi al-Rasheed, "Saudi Arabia: The Challenge of the U.S. Invasion of Iraq," in Rick Fawn and Raymond Hinnebusch, eds., *The Iraq War: Causes and Consequences* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2006), p. 157. Some Saudi liberals, though, publicly supported the war because it removed Saddam Hussein from power and promoted democracy in Iraq. This was a very different view than that of the overwhelming majority of Saudi Islamists. See ibid., pp. 157–58.

159. Quoted in Fattah, "Don't Be Friends with Christians or Jews, Saudi Texts Say."

160. International Crisis Group, *Can Saudi Arabia Reform Itself?*, p. 28; Jones, "Seeking a 'Social Contract' for Saudi Arabia," p. 46.

to view the United States as much less threatening than did Islamists. The latter viewed America as a civilizational threat that was born of enduring ideological differences. Reformers' source of resentment, in contrast, was primarily a product of specific U.S. policies that could change. Moreover, whereas Islamists saw America as the key threat to their domestic objectives, Saudi reformers at critical times viewed the United States as a support to their domestic goals. These views made reformers much more supportive of Saudi Arabia's bilateral relationship with the United States, despite their intense opposition to specific American policies in the region.

## CONCLUSION

This chapter had two main purposes. The first was to examine the reasons why Saudi and American leaders were able to develop a close alliance over many decades despite the huge ideological differences dividing them. I found that this outcome was due to a combination of the following factors: the simultaneous importance of realist calculations to both Saudi and American policymakers that privileged shared major material interests over ideological concerns; the ability of the Al Saud to marginalize other ideological groups (e.g., Wahhabi clerics in the religious establishment) in formulating Saudi Arabia's policies toward America; and the fact that both American and Saudi leaders shared, despite their significant ideological differences, an intense hostility toward other ideologies, especially communism.

These findings help us understand why some ideological groups and not others are likely to ally. For example, unlike the U.S.-Saudi relationship, America's relations with the Islamic Republic of Iran rarely, if ever, reflected realist perspectives by both groups of leaders at the same time. There was, as a result, little opportunity for these policymakers to believe that ideological calculations would play a subordinate role in their relationship. Nor were Iranian leaders, unlike their Saudi counterparts, able to marginalize from the international decision-making process those Islamist groups that were most ideologically hostile to the United States. As one scholar expresses this point, whereas Wahhabi clerics in Saudi Arabia "accepted a 'secretive advisory role' under the patronage of the state," "Iranian mullahs became the state itself."[161] These differences between Saudi Arabia and Iran resulted in ideological variables dominating U.S.-Iranian relations, but not U.S.-Saudi interactions, even though both Saudi Arabia and Iran shared

161. Al-Rasheed, *Contesting the Saudi State*, p. 105.

with America significant material interests (e.g., the sale and purchase of fossil fuels and opposition to the Soviet Union during the Cold War).

The chapter's second primary objective was to demonstrate how ideological considerations affected in major ways U.S.-Saudi relations after the Cold War's end, and especially after 2001. I demonstrated 1) how the ideological gulf separating Saudi Arabia and the United States weakened the alliance in the 1990s and early 2000s, 2) how the effects of ideological distances led various groups of Saudi dissident Islamists (including both the Sahwa sheiks and AQAP) to view both America and the Saudi government as enemies, 3) how the Saudi government adopted a number of liberalizing policies in the 2000s largely to defuse the ideological threat posed by these Islamists, 4) how the effects of ideological polarity, namely shared ideological enmity against radical Islamists in a condition of ideological multipolarity, were central to revitalizing the alliance between Saudi Arabia and the United States, and 5) how those Saudi domestic groups that were most interested in domestic liberalization also tended to be the most supportive of the U.S.-Saudi bilateral relationship.

Ideologies are likely to affect the U.S.-Saudi relationship in critical ways in the future. Although the realism and the domestic power of the Al Saud have to an important degree insulated relations with the United States from the effects of ideological differences, the evolution of Saudi domestic politics in the future is likely to have a growing importance on this relationship. If the Al Saud try to address the Islamist insurgency in their country that began in 2003 by giving more domestic power to Wahhabis or deflecting internal criticism of the regime outward by promoting Wahhabi interests abroad (as the government did in the past by supporting jihadists in Afghanistan, Bosnia, Chechnya, and Somalia[162]), tensions with the United States will rise. In this scenario, the Saudi government will be empowering those groups that are highly hostile to America. Saudi leaders' promotion of Wahhabism abroad even in the service of goals the United States supports—such as the containment of Iranian influence in Lebanon and Palestine—is also likely to have deleterious effects on American interests in the long run. Such actions will in all likelihood foment sectarianism and radicalism in areas that are of high regional importance to the United States.

Saudi leaders' reaction to the popular protests for greater rights that in 2011 spread across much of the Arab world, including Saudi Arabia, is another source of friction in U.S.-Saudi relations. In response to these events, the Obama administration encouraged the Saudis to increase the pace of liberalizing reforms in the kingdom as the best means of protecting long-run stability. Key Saudi leaders, though, believed the opposite. Instead of accelerating the pace of reforms, the Saudi government met demands for more liberalization with a combination of increased social welfare spending,

162. For examples of how these policies endangered U.S. interests, see Ottaway, *The King's Messenger*, pp. 265–66.

the enlisting of senior clerics to condemn political protests as un-Islamic, and increased repression and sectarianism (e.g., blaming protests on Saudi Shia backed by Iran).[163] In terms of foreign policies, the Saudis went on an international counteroffensive to "shield other monarchs from popular discontent and avert the overthrow of any more leaders . . . The kingdom is aggressively emphasizing the relative stability of monarchies, part of an effort to avert any drastic shift from the authoritarian model." As part of these efforts, the Saudi government sent troops to Bahrain to help crush protests and prevent a revolution in that country, sent billions in aid to fellow authoritarians to shore up their regimes, and invited Jordan and Morocco to join the other Gulf monarchies in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC).[164] Here we clearly see how ideological similarities shape international relations. Saudi leaders are worried that the overthrow of ideological allies abroad will damage their domestic interests to the point where international support becomes imperative.

Different reactions by Saudi and American leaders to the 2011 "Arab Spring" have resulted in a cooling of relations between the two countries to the lowest point since 2003. This is another example of ideological differences between Saudi and American elites resulting in important frictions between them. Saudi officials, as two *New York Times* reporters summarize, "show little patience with American messages about embracing what Mr. Obama calls 'universal values,' including peaceful protests."[165] One Arab official stated that King Abdullah's willingness to listen to the Obama administration "evaporated" after Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak was forced from power in February 2011.[166] Another prominent Saudi analyst with ties to Saudi leaders similarly claims that a "tectonic shift has occurred in the U.S.-Saudi relationship." Although the United States and Saudi Arabia still have a number of major common interests, in the wake of the events of 2011 "Riyadh intends to pursue a much more assertive foreign policy, at times conflicting with American interests."[167] These more assertive actions include supporting many fellow authoritarians throughout the Middle East and more aggressively countering Iranian influence (the two goals are interrelated in Saudi leaders' minds; they see Iran as both fomenting domestic

163. On these points, see Helene Cooper and Mark Landler, "Interests of Saudi Arabia and Iran Collide, with the U.S. in the Middle," *New York Times*, March 17, 2011.

164. Neil MacFarquhar, "Saudi Arabia Scrambles to Limit Region's Upheaval," *New York Times*, May 27, 2011.

165. David Sanger and Eric Schmitt, "U.S.-Saudi Tensions Intensify with Mideast Turmoil," *New York Times*, March 14, 2011.

166. Quoted in Cooper and Landler, "Interests of Saudi Arabia and Iran Collide."

167. Nawaf Obaid, "Amid the Arab Spring, a U.S.-Saudi Split," *Washington Post*, May 15, 2011.

unrest throughout the region and likely to benefit the most if the Gulf monarchies and other autocrats are overthrown). As long as ideological differences lead American leaders to support liberalizing reforms in the Middle East as a key to increasing stability and the Saudis to believe the opposite, important conflicts and perceived threats between the two countries will continue, despite ongoing shared interests in other areas.

Although the 2011 protests across the Arab world make the following prescription less likely given Saudi leaders' initial reactions to these developments, the best-case scenario for U.S. interests is that the Al Saud continue the liberalization process in their country that began in earnest in the 2000s. Key Saudi policymakers indicated before the events of 2011 that this was likely. Perhaps as the immediate threat of revolution in the Middle East recedes, the Saudis may be more willing to view domestic reforms as in their long-run interests. In a 2010 interview (albeit with a Western paper), Foreign Minister Prince Saud al-Faisal stated that Saudi Arabia is "moving in the direction of a liberal society. . . . The trend for reform is set, and there is no looking back. Clerics [in the religious establishment] who every now and then come with statements in the opposite direction are releasing frustration rather than believing that they can stop the trend and turn back the clock."[168] If statements such as these prove accurate, major benefits will be created for American security. To begin with, Saudi Arabia is likely a classic example illustrating the dangers of democratization that precedes widespread liberalization.[169] Elections in Saudi Arabia that come before key dimensions of liberalization (including a flourishing middle class, a widespread respect for civil liberties and political pluralism, and well-formed political parties that represent a variety of interests) could very easily result in the rise to power of Islamist groups that are much more hostile to the United States than are the Al Saud (even some Saudi liberals make this argument).[170] Saudi Islamist groups have considerable influence and resources, and they did very well in the 2005 municipal elections in the kingdom.[171] Because there is a high probability that democratization without liberalization would lead to a worse ideological enemy controlling Saudi Arabia's resources, the United States has an interest in helping Saudi Arabia liberalize before national elections occur. Reforms initiated by the Al Saud, as long as they are significant and sustained, could help realize this objective.

168. Quoted in Maureen Dowd, "Loosey Goosey Saudi," *New York Times*, March 3, 2010.

169. On these dangers, see Fareed Zakaria, *The Future of Freedom: Illiberal Democracy at Home and Abroad* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2003); Edward D. Mansfield and Jack Snyder, *Electing to Fight: Why Emerging Democracies Go to* War (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2005).

170. See International Crisis Group, *Saudi Arabia Backgrounder: Who Are the Islamists?* (ICG Middle East Report No. 31: Amman/Riyadh/Brussels, September 21, 2004), p. 8.

171. F. Gregory Gause III, "Can Democracy Stop Terrorism?" *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 84, No. 5 (September/October 2005), pp. 73–74.

Further liberalization in Saudi Arabia will also likely help to empower those Saudi domestic groups that have tended to be the most supportive of ties with America. Liberalization in the kingdom will therefore help to create an alliance based on shared values as well as material interests, which will help avoid in the future some of the ideological tensions that have plagued relations with the United States since the 1990s.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the Al Saud's efforts at delegitimizing Islamic extremism in favor of more liberal interpretations of Islam that stress moderation, tolerance, and compromise are critical for U.S. efforts to win the "war on terrorism." Saudi Arabia—not the United States—possesses the requisite "soft power" in the Islamic world to shape in major ways what Islam should stand for and advocate. If the Al Saud continue with these liberalizing efforts, the Saudi royal family will be a major ideological benefit to American security despite the otherwise substantial differences that continue to divide the two states.

# Conclusion

The empirical chapters offer substantial support for the ideological explanation of threat perceptions and foreign policy preferences that was developed in chapter 1. The predicted effects of both ideological distances and ideological polarity were to a great extent confirmed. Contrary to the predictions of realist theories, different ideological groups in Muslim-majority countries had very different perceptions and policies toward the United States, despite the constancy from these groups' perspective of American power and actions. The greater the ideological differences dividing various groups from the United States, the higher the perceived threat tended to be (Hypothesis 1); various sets of ideological rivals were for the most part able to overcome ideological impediments to alignment only when very strong and/or multiple incentives for alliance existed, many of which were created by a condition of ideological multipolarity (Hypothesis 2); leaders of different ideological groups often dedicated major resources to try to export their ideological principles as a key means of enhancing their state's security (Hypothesis 3A); and "ideological soft-line" policies tended to be most successful in advancing U.S. interests toward ideological rivals when either ideological moderates governed in the target regime or for ideologically multipolar relationships (Hypothesis 3B). "Ideological hard-line" policies, in contrast, were most effective when ideological conservatives had power in the target state.

More specifically, ideological distances largely determined which actors leaders saw as likely threats or supports to both their international and domestic interests, and consequently their levels of animosity or cooperation. Thus Iranian, Saudi, and Turkish Islamists consistently assumed the worst about America's international intentions, and all were obsessed about the possibility of subversion by Western ideological principles. These fears led Islamists to argue for the removal of American influence in the Middle East; relatively low economic interaction with the United

States; the creation of institutions and forces capable of harming American interests; and the adoption of policies that directly thwarted key U.S. objectives in the region, including actions that both harmed the Israeli-Palestinian peace process and fueled the insurgency in Iraq after America's invasion of that country in 2003. Turkish conservatives (except for the Justice and Development Party) and especially Kemalists had analogous views and policies toward Islamist groups, most importantly Iran. In order to reduce the dangers caused by large ideological distances, numerous ideological groups—including Iranian and Saudi Islamists, Turkish conservatives, and U.S. politicians—actively tried to export their ideological principles.

Liberalizers in Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey were for the most part much more supportive of the United States than were Islamists from the same country at the same time. Liberalizers frequently supported economic, cultural, and/or military cooperation with America, and they condemned attacks against it. Turkish Kemalists and conservatives, for example, for most of the 1990s and 2000s argued for continued tight alliance with the United States. Iranian reformers pushed for greater cooperation with America on critical issues, including the war in Afghanistan and the development of Iranian nuclear weapons. Iranian, Saudi, and Turkish liberalizers also rejected the belief that the United States and its liberal allies were ideological "others" that posed major subversive threats to their domestic interests. The opposite, in fact, was frequently the case. These reformers viewed Western states as sources of ideological inspiration that created a foundation for cooperation. Some Saudi reformers, for example, were the most forceful in pushing for domestic change when the United States was actively involved in Middle Eastern politics, including during the First Gulf War and the months after 9/11. Turkish liberalizers used close ties with liberal powers, including America, both to validate the Western orientation of their foreign policies and to leverage increased domestic liberalization. Iranian reformers argued that they should learn and implement what was "best" about Western beliefs and institutions, and these outcomes could only happen in a peaceful international environment that included normalization of relations with the United States.

Although the empirical chapters revealed that large ideological differences dividing states' leaders frequently resulted in high levels of threat and consequent international hostilities, it is worth highlighting that this was not always the case. There were three major instances in the case studies in which ideological enemies either engaged in significant security cooperation or had relatively low threat perceptions of the other: the Syrian-Iranian alliance, the Saudi-American alliance, and the low threat of Iran as perceived by leaders of Turkey's governing Justice and Development Party

(JDP). These outcomes in some ways support and in some ways refute my argument.

Although realist calculations played roles in the origins and maintenance of the Syrian-Iranian and Saudi-American alliances, in support of my hypotheses are the facts that 1) the ideological differences dividing both Syrian and Iranian, as well as American and Saudi policymakers, created important barriers to alignment that required very strong incentives to overcome; 2) the effects of ideological differences at various times caused major frictions in these alliances despite the continued presence of significant shared material interests; and 3) ideological variables, paradoxically, frequently played a central role in surmounting the ideological impediments to alignment. On this last point, Syrian and Iranian and American and Saudi leaders were brought together to an important extent by shared ideological hostility against a third ideological group that existed in a condition of ideological multipolarity (anti-Zionism in the case of Syria and Iran, and particularly anticommunism and then mutual hostility toward Islamic extremists in the case of America and Saudi Arabia).

JDP leaders' views and policies toward illiberal Muslim-majority states, especially Iran, are more problematic for my argument, though not for realist reasons. The ideological content of these Turkish politicians' beliefs—specifically, calls for cooperation with Muslim-majority countries and "zero problems" with all of Turkey's neighbors—pushed these individuals to see the threat levels of surrounding states as low, despite both large ideological differences dividing many of them and significant increases in Iran's relative power as its nuclear weapons and missile programs developed. As I explained in chapter 4, however, in the wake of the 2011 "Arab Spring" the effects of ideological distance are becoming more important to Turkish leaders in relation to the effects of ideological content. Major conflicts with Turkey's illiberal neighbors, especially Syria and Iran, are, as a result, on the rise.

Demonstrating that large ideological distances were frequently fundamental to various groups' hostilities with the United States does not mean that America's Middle Eastern policies and the power that made them possible did not contribute in important ways to this enmity. For example, in some instances Islamists' animosity toward America became acute only in the aftermath of particular U.S. actions (e.g., the placement of American troops in Saudi Arabia in 1990).

However, to attribute the root cause of Islamists' hostility toward America to the latter's Middle Eastern policies, as realists frequently do[1], is mistaken on four levels. First, to reiterate a point made many times throughout the

1. See, for example, Christopher Layne, "America's Middle East Grand Strategy after Iraq: The Moment for Offshore Balancing has Arrived," *Review of International Studies*, Vol. 35, No. 1 (January 2009), pp. 5–25; Robert A. Pape, "The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 97, No. 3 (August 2003), pp. 343–61.

book, if American policies were the key determinant of various Middle Eastern groups' hostilities toward the United States, we would not see systematic, significant variation in threat perceptions and consequent actions toward the United States among different ideological factions from the same country at the same time. For all such groups, American power and policies are constant, and thus cannot account for major variations in outcomes. This conclusion is reinforced by the findings of two of the main research methods that I used in the case studies. Leaders frequently attributed their international perceptions and preferences to ideological variables (as was revealed by the method of "process tracing"), and the timing of states' foreign policy changes frequently corresponded with shifts in ideological distances or polarity as the domestic power of different ideological groups altered (the method of "longitudinal" analysis). Thus, shifts in the domestic power of various ideological factions in Turkey, Iran, and Saudi Arabia were followed by important foreign policy changes, even though most other variables remained the same.[2]

A second reason why it is a mistake to attribute the root source of Islamists' enmity with America to the latter's foreign policies is that what constituted "hostile" or "aggressive" policies by the United States was frequently open to interpretation. Some American policies—such as one-sided support of Israel and the war in Iraq—were condemned by almost all ideological groups studied in the empirical chapters. Many U.S. actions, however, did not generate consensus, but were instead perceived in very different ways. Many Saudi Islamists, for example, saw the placement of American troops in their state as a mortal threat to their objectives and beliefs. The Al Saud and Saudi liberalizers, in contrast, viewed these actions as supporting their interests. While many Iranian conservatives for the most part opposed helping the United States in the 2001 war in Afghanistan, Iranian reformers pushed for extensive cooperation. Whereas Turkish center-right parties tended to support American efforts to spread democracy in the Middle East, Turkish Islamists rejected increases in American influence and activity throughout the region. Thus, in many cases *how particular U.S. policies were understood in terms of their threat levels was dependent on ideological distances*, and realist analyses of America's relations in the Middle East miss this critical fact.

Third, illiberal groups very often viewed America's power and Middle Eastern policies as threatening *because of their ideological impact*, specifically the perceived subversive effects that U.S. actions would have on their state and society. Islamists, for example, were very worried that the projection of American influence in the Middle East would result in the spread of liberal ideological principles at the expense of "Islamic" culture

2. The domestic change in Saudi Arabia was the increased power after 2002 of Islamic terrorist groups, which altered calculations of ideological polarity for the Al Saud.

and beliefs (as defined by Islamists). Thus, various Islamist groups recognized that America's power made it a more dangerous enemy than other, less powerful liberal states. But American power and actions were to a great degree perceived as threatening because increasing U.S. influence in the Middle East undermined the realization of Islamists' domestic-ideological objectives.

Iranian and Saudi Islamists were particularly obsessed with the possibility of ideological subversion by Western principles. Hence these individuals' beliefs that seemingly friendly policies—such as increased trade, economic development, and people-to-people interactions—were highly dangerous. Without the fear of subversion, i.e., in different ideological contexts involving different ideological groups, many American policies were not perceived as especially threatening. Indeed, liberalizing groups in Muslim-majority countries welcomed many of the same actions that Islamists viewed as highly destabilizing and dangerous.

Given the ideological foundations of Islamists' hostility toward the United States, it would be very difficult to end this enmity even if U.S. leaders were to adopt more accommodating policies, as realists sometimes advocate.[3] Again, even seemingly friendly actions like economic development and exchange are often perceived by Islamists as highly threatening. Consequently, unless the United States completely disengages from the Middle East—militarily, economically, and culturally (all of which include ending America's alliance with Israel)—Islamists' fears of subversion, and thus hostilities toward the United States, are likely to continue.

A final way in which ideologies shaped threat perceptions was that many Islamists attributed "aggressive" actions by the United States to the effects of ideological distances, namely America's ideological hostility to Islam. There was, in this view, an ideological foundation to American policies that made them unlikely to change. Continued conflict with America was therefore perceived to be virtually inevitable. As Osama bin Laden put this point in a 1995 statement: "[J]ihad [against America and its allies] will go on until the Day of Judgment."[4] Or, as Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei of Iran explained, American leaders' hostility to Iran was a "fundamental enmity" that had and will "always" push them to threaten the Iranian regime.[5]

As a consequence of views like these, Islamists' hostilities toward the United States are to an important extent independent of American policies.

3. See the sources in footnote 1.

4. Osama bin Laden, "The Invasion of Arabia" (statement c. 1995/1996), in *Messages to the World: The Statements of Osama bin Laden*, ed. Bruce Lawrence, trans. James Howarth (London: Verso, 2005), p. 19.

5. Quoted in Akbar Ganji, "The Latter-Day Sultan: Power and Politics in Iran," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 87, No. 6 (November/December 2008), p. 65.

U.S. actions that are perceived to be provocative *will tend to confirm—not create—Islamists' high threat perceptions,* which are based on both intense fears of ideological subversion and beliefs in the inevitability of conflict with ideological enemies. Moreover, even if the United States were to adopt conciliatory policies, Islamists' beliefs in America's ideological enmity to Islam and consequent intense suspicions of U.S. intentions would likely push them to doubt the permanence or sincerity of these actions. These fears would keep threat levels of the United States high. Thus, Osama bin Laden claimed that he remained intensely hostile to the United States in the 1980s even as he and fellow Islamist insurgents in Afghanistan were receiving large amounts of American aid to defeat the Soviet military (this enmity also existed before some of America's most "aggressive" policies in the Middle East from Islamists' perspective, primarily the stationing of tens of thousands of troops in Saudi Arabia during and after the Persian Gulf War in 1991). According to bin Laden: "I did not fight against the communist threat while forgetting the peril from the West. . . . [W]e had to fight on all fronts against communist or Western oppression. The urgent thing was communism, but the next target was America."[6] Iranian Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei similarly claimed that U.S. leaders' apologies during the Clinton presidency for past actions against Iran were "just another ploy laying the ground for their sinister plots."[7] More recently, President Obama's accommodating policies toward Iran throughout 2009 did little to alter Iranian conservatives' hostilities toward the United States, as I discussed in chapter 2. Instead of welcoming Obama's more conciliatory approach, Iranian conservatives labeled the president's outreach policy one of "soft war" that endangered the Islamic Republic's core principles.

The perceptions and policies of secular authoritarians, such as those in Baathist Syria, toward the United States were largely in between those of Islamists and reformers/liberalizers. These individuals were often more cooperative than Islamists, but not nearly as consistently so or as extensively as liberalizers. One pattern that was revealed by chapter 3's analysis demonstrated that secular authoritarians' cooperation with other ideological groups was tied to the intensity of domestic threats in an ideologically multipolar environment. When the domestic threat posed by Islamists in the 2000s was particularly high, the Syrians cooperated with America in order to weaken their shared ideological enemy. At other times, however,

6. Quoted in "Osama bin Laden v. the U.S.: Edicts and Statements," available at http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/binladen/who/edicts.html. Accessed November 15, 2011.

7. Quoted in Ray Takeyh, *Guardians of the Revolution: Iran and the World in the Age of the Ayatollahs* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009). p. 203.

Syrian leaders responded to growing forces for domestic liberalization by increasing their support of domestic and international Islamist groups.

Notice the great irony for American foreign policies in the Middle East that this analysis reveals. In the short run, the United States is most likely to receive cooperation from autocrats when America's most dangerous ideological enemy—Islamists—are the most powerful opposition group in these regimes. Conversely, authoritarians are most likely to align with and even foster Islamists when America's primary ideological ally—liberals—are the most powerful opposition party. Consequently, although supporting liberal parties in the Middle East is likely to significantly benefit American security in the long run, in the near term liberals' rise will create some incentives that harm U.S. interests. The Syrian and Saudi responses to the 2011 popular protests across much of the Arab world provide examples of these dynamics, as I discussed in chapters 3 and 5.

## IMPLICATIONS FOR U.S. FOREIGN POLICIES

The findings in the empirical chapters generate key implications for America's Middle Eastern relations. Given the importance of ideologies to leaders' threat perceptions and core international-security policies, American decision makers would be wise to make these variables central to their assessments of international politics. To put this point another way, to fail to incorporate ideological variables into states' security strategies is to ignore key dimensions of how the world works. Ideologically based assessments of international relations are thus often more realistic than "realist" theories that ignore or downplay the importance of ideologies.

Condoleezza Rice, National Security Advisor and Secretary of State for President George W. Bush, expressed this point well in 2005. According to her, "the fundamental [ideological] character of regimes matters more [for America's security] . . . than the international distribution of power. Insisting otherwise is imprudent and impractical . . . Attempting to draw neat, clean lines between [American] security interests and our democratic ideas does not reflect the reality of today's world . . . If the school of thought called 'realism' is to be truly realistic, it must recognize that stability without democracy will prove to be a false stability."[8]

Simply recognizing that ideologies are important to international relations is, however, not sufficient for effective policymaking. Rice and fellow Bush administration officials correctly understood that ideological

8. Condoleezza Rice, "The Promise of Democratic Peace: Why Promoting Freedom is the Only Realistic Path to Security," *Washington Post*, December 11, 2005.

relationships were likely to have major international-security effects in the Middle East. However, as I documented in the empirical chapters, they also made three critical errors on this subject that undermined U.S. interests. First, they failed to take into account in key instances the full range of ways in which ideologies shape leaders' foreign policies. Specifically, the Bush administration tended to concentrate on the effects of ideological distances within the context of the liberal-illiberal divide and not those of ideological polarity. Bush administration officials, in other words, tended not to recognize the importance of the large ideological differences dividing different groups of illiberals, namely secular authoritarians (e.g., Syria) and Islamists (e.g., Iran). This error caused these leaders to miss key international effects created by ideological multipolarity.

Correctly understanding the impact of ideological multipolarity on outcomes likely would have resulted in very different international assessments and policies, particularly with regard to the likelihood and durability of alliances among ideological enemies. I documented in Chapter 3 how the Bush administration failed to take full advantage of the divisive forces created by the large ideological distance separating Syrian and Iranian leaders to help drive a wedge between them. When assessing the foreign policies of ideological enemies, analysts should not lose sight of how difficult it is for these groups to form and sustain extensive security cooperation with one another. Many in the Bush administration, however, made precisely this mistake.[9]

In addition to not always recognizing the importance of ideological multipolarity to key outcomes, a second major error that Bush administration officials made regarding the effects of ideologies in international relations is that in critical instances they did not alter their policies toward ideological rivals depending on circumstances. Their dominant tactic toward enemy countries was to adopt in almost all conditions what I have labeled "ideological hard-line" policies. Sometimes this strategy succeeded (e.g., toward Iran after 2005), and sometimes it failed (e.g., toward Iran from 2001 to

9. Missed opportunities to weaken the Syrian-Iranian alliance were not the only important instance in which Bush administration officials failed to see how ideological differences among various enemies of America could inhibit cooperation among them. These individuals also overestimated the likelihood of an alliance between Saddam Hussein's secular regime and al Qaeda (putative extensive cooperation between these two groups was one of the main justifications for the 2003 Iraq War). Captured Iraqi documents and testimony of captured high-ranking al Qaeda and Iraqi officials indicate that ideological differences created what proved to be an insurmountable barrier to alignment between the two groups. See James Risen, "Iraqi Agent Denies He Met 9/11 Hijacker in Prague Before Attacks on the U.S.," *New York Times*, December 13, 2003; James Risen, "Hussein Warned Iraqis to Beware Outside Fighters, Document Says," *New York Times,* January 14, 2004.

2005 and toward Syria after 2003). Ironically, the Obama presidency—at least throughout 2009—made the same error as the Bush administration, though in reverse. Obama's strategy toward enemies during his first year in office was almost always to adopt soft-line policies.[10] Again, sometimes these actions met with some success (e.g., toward Syria, as we saw chapter 3), and sometimes they failed (e.g., toward Iran, as we saw in chapter 2).

Instead of adopting one dominant strategy toward ideological rivals, with the partial successes that this approach is likely to realize, it would be better to vary tactics in the appropriate circumstances, particularly based on the domestic power possessed by ideological reformers in the target regime and whether the region is one of ideological multipolarity. I discussed these conditions at length in preceding chapters, especially 1 through 3. The Bush administration's actions toward Iran from 2001 to 2005 illustrate well the costs of not varying policies depending on the appropriate conditions. Iranian reformers' liberal sympathies and increased domestic power in the early 2000s led them to pursue policies that were much more supportive of U.S. interests than were the actions advocated by Iranian conservatives. Bush administration officials' consistent hard-line policies that demanded a full-blown revolution in Iran, though, blinded them to this reality, thereby causing them to miss a key ideological opportunity to advance U.S. interests.

Finally, the leaders of the Bush presidency did not sufficiently take into account how America's Middle Eastern policies might offset the beneficial effects created by relatively low ideological distances (here we see another instance of synergy between realist arguments and my own). Bush administration officials were correct in their assessment that liberals in the Middle East would be much more supportive of the United States than other ideological groups. The problem was that some American policies created countervailing forces to the uniting effects created by ideological similarities. A common theme of many of these policies was that they caused numerous people in the Muslim world—including liberals and reformers—to doubt America's commitment to liberalism. These actions included largely one-sided support of Israel in its conflict with the Palestinian people, sending suspected or confirmed terrorists to illiberal states (such as Syria) to be tortured to acquire information as part of America's controversial rendition program, and the indefinite detention and sometimes torture of accused combatants and terrorists at the Guantanamo Bay detainment

10. As one foreign policy analyst put it: "If there is a one-word handle that fits the conduct of foreign relations in Barack Obama's first year as president, it is 'engagement.' The Obama administration has engaged with Iran, Russia, Burma, Sudan, [and] North Korea" (James Traub, "Obama's Foreign Engagement Scorecard," *New York Times*, December 19, 2009).

camp in Cuba.[11] Most damaging to America's reputation was the Iraq war. Using force to spread liberty seemed to many a contradiction that was difficult to resolve. America's inadvertent killing of civilians during the war—especially when accompanied by some deliberate barbarities, such as the much-publicized inhumane treatment of prisoners by U.S. forces at the Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq—was particularly damaging to America's liberal reputation.[12] Invading and occupying a Muslim country also fueled many ordinary Muslims' nationalistic sentiments against the United States.

The actions described in the previous paragraph reduced Muslim liberals' and reformers' support for the United States, their willingness to look to America for aid lest such ties result in a populist backlash against them, or both. Thus, for example, numerous Syrian reformers claimed after the Iraq War began that they wanted little support from America in their attempts to liberalize Syrian politics.[13] These individuals believed that American aid would hurt their cause because it would make Syrians choose between liberalization backed by the United States and anti-Americanism and nationalist sentiments, both of which widespread and powerful. Similar dynamics occurred among Saudi liberalizers, as I discussed in chapter 5. Liberalizers, unlike Islamists, for the most part did not advocate violence against America in protest of its policies. But reformers did call for withholding cooperation from the United States and distancing in their relationship in reaction to some American actions.

In the aftermath of the errors made by the Bush administration in the Middle East, one likely response would be to discount the importance of ideologies to leaders' foreign policies and return to a more "realist" understanding of international relations. Numerous prominent analysts have advocated precisely this choice.[14]

This approach would be a mistake for U.S. interests. This does not mean that realist arguments do not offer valuable prescriptions for advancing U.S. security in the Middle East. To the contrary, some of the Bush administration's

11. On this last point, see the unanimous bipartisan report "Senate Armed Services Committee Inquiry into the Treatment of Detainees in U.S. Custody," published November 20, 2008, http://armed-services.senate.gov/Publications/Detainee%20Report%20Final_April%2022%202009.pdf. Accessed November 15, 2011.

12. On the preceding points, see Francis Fukuyama and Michael McFaul, "Should Democracy Be Promoted or Demoted?" *Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 31, No. 1 (Winter 2007–08), pp. 23–45.

13. Eyal Zisser, *Commanding Syria: Bashar al-Asad and the First Years in Power* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2007), pp. 92, 95; Joshua Landis and Joe Pace, "The Syrian Opposition," *Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 30, No. 1 (Winter 2006–07), pp. 62–64.

14. See, for example, Layne, "America's Middle East Grand Strategy after Iraq"; Dmitri Trenin, "A Less Ideological America," *Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 31, No. 4 (Autumn 2008), pp. 117–23; Stephen M. Walt, *Taming American Power: The Global Response to U.S. Primacy* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2005).

actions that damaged America's reputation in the Islamic world could have been rectified by adhering to less intrusive, "over the horizon" policies advocated by realist "offshore balancers."[15]

What realists—including offshore balancers—miss, however, is the overall importance of ideologies to international relations. America's leaders, for example, should in key instances adopt more accommodating policies in the Middle East because these actions in many cases *will better allow the effects of ideologies to advance U.S. interests*. In the right policy environment, liberalizers' native affinity for the United States will be freer to surface, and different groups of ideological enemies of America (e.g., Islamists and secular authoritarians) will find it even more difficult to create and sustain an alliance against the United States.

Instead of discounting ideological variables in the formation of American policies, U.S. leaders should correct the errors of the Bush administration without abandoning its emphasis on the importance of ideologies in international relations. The most important policy prescription generated by this book is that America's leaders should try to help liberals and reformers in the Middle East increase their domestic power.[16] As the empirical chapters demonstrate, the United States has frequently affected the domestic debates in other countries. While U.S. policymakers have made major mistakes in the past in attempting to spread liberalism in the Middle East, the logic underpinning this goal remains sound. Liberalizers in Muslim-majority countries tend to be consistently more supportive of U.S. interests than other ideological groups. The more political power liberals and reformers have in Middle Eastern countries, the more favorable many governments' policies toward the United States are likely to be. It would be a serious strategic error to abandon the goal of promoting liberalism because the tactics adopted to pursue it have in some cases been wrongheaded.

The Obama administration has gone through a noteworthy transformation on this issue. For roughly his first two years in office, Obama's foreign policy inclinations were largely realist. According to White House Chief of Staff Rahm Emanuel (speaking in 2010), in a choice between "idealist and realist," Obama was "more realpolitik."[17]

15. See Layne, "America's Middle East Grand Strategy after Iraq."

16. One set of U.S. policies that played a role in fomenting the 2011 "Arab Spring" was training various leaders of reform movements in the Middle East in such things as campaigning, organizing, and using media and social networking tools. These efforts took place even in authoritarian allies of the United States, including in Bahrain, Egypt, and Yemen. See Ron Nixon, "U.S. Groups Helped Nurture Arab Uprisings," *New York Times*, April 14, 2011.

17. Quoted in Peter Baker, "Obama Puts Own Mark on Foreign Policy Issues," *New York Times*, April 14, 2010.

Obama's realist sympathies were clearly evident in his Iranian policies in 2009. Obama officials—in realist fashion—believed that the international-policy differences between Iranian conservatives and reformers were slight. Consequently, the United States had little strategic interest in helping reformers augment their power. In a June 2009 interview, Obama stated that from a national security perspective, there was little difference for America if the hardliner Mahmoud Ahmadinejad or the reformer Mir Hussein Mousavi won the 2009 presidential elections. "Either way," asserted Obama, the United States is "going to be dealing with an Iranian regime that has historically been hostile to the United States, that has caused some problems in the neighborhood and is pursuing nuclear weapons." Indeed, because Iranian reformers and conservatives were likely to pursue similar international policies toward America despite their domestic differences, in some ways it was better for the United States to have Iranian conservatives win the election. As a senior Obama official told the *Wall Street Journal*: "Had there been a transition to a new government [if Mousavi had won], a new president wouldn't have emerged until August. In some respects, [Ahmadinejad's victory] might allow Iran to engage the international community quicker."[18] These viewpoints ignore the centrality of ideologies to Iranian leaders' foreign policies that I detailed in chapter 2. Given this major oversight, it is not surprising that Obama's Iranian policies during his first years in office failed to achieve their objectives, as I also discuss in that chapter.

The events associated with the 2011 "Arab Spring" have made ideologies in general and the spread of liberalism in particular much more important to President Obama and his closest advisors. The result is that whereas "in his first two years in office, Mr. Obama said little about democratic transformations as a core goal . . . now [2011] he has begun speaking of them as a central part of the 'alternative narrative' to [that of ideological enemies, e.g.,] Al Qaeda's theology, or Iran's."[19]

Obama administration officials after the Arab Spring argued that the spread of liberalism is a vital American security interest because it will advance, especially in the long run, international peace and stability. Deputy National Security Advisor Benjamin J. Rhodes, who drafts many of Obama's speeches on this issue, describes the president's transformation from a realist to someone who takes international ideological relationships in the Middle East much more seriously as follows: "The president wanted to

18. Quotations from, respectively, Helene Cooper and Mark Landler, "For Obama, Pressure to Strike a Firmer Tone," *New York Times*, June 18, 2009, and Jay Solomon and Chip Cummins, "Iran's Election Results Stoke Global Debate," *Wall Street Journal*, June 15, 2009.

19. David Sanger, "Half a Doctrine Will Have to Do," *New York Times*, May 21, 2011.

clearly and unequivocally embrace change in the region. It was necessary for him to step back and say that not only does he support the aspirations of the people we have seen in the streets, but supporting them is in our long-term interest."[20]

According to President Obama in a major policy speech that laid out his administration's vision for U.S.-Middle Eastern relations in light of the events of 2011: "[W]e must acknowledge that a strategy based solely upon the narrow pursuit of [material] interests . . . will only feed the suspicion [among the peoples of the Middle East] that has festered for years that the United States pursues our interests at their expense . . . [Thus] a failure to change our approach threatens a deepening spiral of division between the United States and the Arab world . . . Our support for [universal liberal] principles is not a secondary interest. Today I want to make it clear that it is a top priority that must be translated into concrete actions, and supported by all of the diplomatic, economic and strategic tools at our disposal . . . [I]t will be the policy of the United States to promote reform across the region, and to support transitions to democracy . . . [T]he United States of America was founded on the belief that people should govern themselves. And now we cannot hesitate to stand squarely on the side of those who are reaching for their rights, knowing that their success will bring about a world that is more peaceful, more stable, and more just."[21]

Stating that liberalism promotion should be a central U.S. foreign policy objective does not mean that this goal carries no risks. Pushing for greater liberalization in currently illiberal regimes may create a number of negative consequences, including alienating autocratic allies, increasing the incentives for secular authoritarians to increase cooperation with Islamists to counter the growing domestic threat posed by liberals, increasing the possibility of more terrorist attacks because liberal societies' greater openness and respect for civil liberties may provide terrorists more room for maneuver, and allowing Islamists or other illiberals to come to power through democratic means.[22]

20. Quoted in Sanger, "Half a Doctrine Will Have to Do."

21. "Obama's Mideast Speech," *New York Times*, May 19, 2011. Earlier in the year, Obama's Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, also asserted a synergy between America's ideological and security interests when she claimed that "without genuine progress [in the Middle East] toward open and accountable political systems, the gap between people and their governments will grow, and instability will only deepen." She said, "This is not simply a matter of idealism; it is a strategic necessity" (quoted in "Clinton: Mideast Must Reform Despite Risks," Associated Press, February 5, 2011).

22. This last outcome is particularly likely if elections take place in societies that have not made much progress toward other key indices of liberalization, such as a thriving middle class, the creation of governmental separation of powers, and protection of minority rights.

Liberalism promotion, in sum, is likely to create trade-offs for U.S. security interests. These trade-offs must be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. As conditions vary, so, too, will the appropriateness of different tactics and the relative importance of competing goals. The key point is that the objective of helping liberals come to power in other states should be central to these calculations, and should not be lightly forsaken.

In addition to attempting to help ideological reformers and liberals acquire more domestic power, a second way in which U.S. policymakers should actively manipulate ideological variables to benefit American security is by using ideological differences among different groups of America's enemies to divide them. Using ideological differences as the foundation of wedge strategies can provide a major boost to U.S. interests even without the rise to power of liberalizers in the target state.[23]

In order to most effectively advance U.S. interests in the Middle East, its leaders must possess an accurate, comprehensive understanding of the international effects of ideologies. By describing both how ideological distances and polarity are likely to shape foreign policies, as well as the likely outcomes resulting from different types of actions (e.g., ideological hard- or soft-line policies) under varying conditions, this book has provided precisely such a framework of analysis.

23. A critical example in which U.S. leaders followed this advice at the sub-state level occurred in Iraq in 2007. The ideological differences dividing different groups of insurgents in Iraq—namely secular Sunni nationalists and Islamists in al Qaeda—allowed the United States to adopt a new counterinsurgency strategy beginning in the spring of 2007. The U.S. at this time began funding and arming many Sunni insurgents so that they could now fight their former Islamist partners, whom they now viewed as an even greater threat than the United States due to their major ideological differences. The strategy met with great successes, including in al Anbar province, which until this time had been one of the most dangerous places for American troops in Iraq. The rearrangement of alliance partners was the key cause of the pacification of Iraq in 2007, more important than the much ballyhooed "surge" of American troops, which occurred later in this year. For details on these points, including analysis of the centrality of ideological differences to the dissolution of the insurgents' alliance, see John A. McCary, "The Anbar Awakening: An Alliance of Incentives," *Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 32, No. 1 (January 2009), pp. 43–59; Andrew Phillips, "How al Qaeda Lost Iraq," *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 63, No. 1 (March 2009), pp. 64–84.

*This page intentionally left blank*

# INDEX

Page numbers in *italics* refer to figures.


Abbas, Mahmoud, 160
Abdullah of Saudi Arabia, 243, 247–48, 250–51, 264, 271
Abu Ghraib prison, 283
AbuKhalil, As'ad, 267n153
Additional Protocol, 95–97
Adelman, Kenneth, 34
Afghanistan, 99, 215–16
Afghanistan war (2000s), 39, 99
Ahmad, Ahmad Iskandar, 131
Ahmadinejad, Mahmoud
  on Israel, 79
  Khamenei and, 74, 74n30, 97n121
  Khatami and, 76n35
  on nuclear weapons in Iran, 89
  Obama and, 122, 285
  presidency, 96, 105, 114
  on U. S.- Iranian relations, 118
  on West, 97n121
Akçali, Emel, 209, 217–18
Al Anbar province, 287n23
Al-Auda, Salman, 253
Alawis, 129n18, 154
Albright, Madeleine, 108–10
Alexander II (tsar), 23
Al-Faqih, Sa'd, 252–53, 256
Alliance of Civilizations, 177, 178n56, 224
alliances
  among ideological enemies, 18–26, 18n42, 36, 41–42, 127–46, 158–59, 233–42, 249–52
  balance-of-power and, 17
  definition, 16–17
  ideological distances and, 16–21, 25–26
  origins, 17–18, 17n37, 21, 23n53
  polarity's effects on, 21–27, 23n51, 27–29
  realist theories of, 20
  states' alliances, 47
Al Qaeda
  Hussein and, 281n9
  in Iran, 104–5
  Saudi Arabia and, 242, 258, 259n118
  Syria and, 154
  Turki on, 260
  war on terror (United States) and, 215
Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), 249, 251, 257–58, 266
Al-Saffar, Hassan, 266n149, 266n152
Al Saud, 232–34, 258, 258n115
Al-Uyairi, Yusuf, 257–58
Amal, 141
Ankara, 201, 208n181
anti-imperialism, 132
anti-Zionism, 129–33, 138, 143–44, 143n74, 149, 276
AQAP. *See* Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP)
Arab cold war, 240
Arabism, 125
Arab-Israeli conflicts, 78–79, 225n243
Arab-Israeli peace process, 225
Arab Spring (2011), xiii–xiv, 25, 162, 221, 223, 227, 270–71, 276, 284n16, 285–86
Arafat, Yasser, 79
Aras, Bülent, 183
Armin, Mohsen, 115
Asad, Bashar al-, 25, 150, 150n102, 156–57, 160
Asad, Hafez al-
  anti-Zionism and, 129, 133
  Bush, George H. W. and, 148

Asad, Hafez al- (*continued*)
Bill Clinton and, 149
Hama massacre and, 136–37
on Hizbollah, 141n65
on Iranian Revolution, 131–32
on Iraq-Iran War (1980), 140
on Israel, 129, 130, 143
on Israeli-Palestinian conflict, 131n24
pan-Arabism and, 143n74
as secular authoritarian, 54–55, 125–26
Asheikh, Saleh al-, 261
Asiltürk, Oğuzhan, 204
Asquith, H. H., 30–31
Atatürk, Mustafa Kemal, 165, 171
Axis of Evil speech (Bush, George H. W.), 66–67, 100, 105, 111, 116, 116n185
Aziz, Abdul, 233, 238, 240
Azizi, Ahmad, 126–27, 140–41

Baath Party (Syria), 126
Babacan, Ali, 194
Bahrain, 271
Bahrain alliance (with Saudi Arabia, 2011), 15
Baker, James A., 146, 160, 213
Bal, Idris, 211
Balkans, 49, 182, 193, 210, 213
balance-of-power, 17, 20
balance-of-threat, 17, 20, 46
Bandar bin Sultan, 248, 258–59
Bangladesh, 185
Bani-Sadr, Abolhassan, 136
Barkey, Henri, 208–9
Basbug, Ilker, 209
Basic National Security Policy (report), 31
Ba'thist regime (Syria), 125–26, 127n12, 149, 279
Belarus, 15, 18
Ben Ali, Zine al-Abidine, xiii
Biden, Joseph, 246
bin Baz, Abdul Aziz, 232
bin Laden, Osama, 242–43, 254–55, 258, 278–79
bin Nayef, Mohammed, 249
Bir, Çevik, 186, 197
Black, Cofer, 250
Blair, Tony, 12
Blum, Leon, 19
Bolton, John, 112, 117
Bonab, Rahman, 190
Bora, Tanil, 205
Bosnia, 211, 213
Bozdağlioğlu, Yücel, 195
Britain, 19, 21n49, 24–26, 26n56
Bronson, Rachel, 238, 247, 267
Browers, Michaelle, 54n125
Brumberg, Daniel, 70n11, 82, 87, 103
Buchanan, Patrick, 34
Buffotot, Patrice, 13
Bush, George H. W.
Syria and, 146–49
Turkey and, 213
Bush, George W.
Axis of Evil speech, 66–67, 100, 105, 111, 116, 116n185
Bashar al-Asad and, 156
*Decision Points*, 151
Greater Middle East Initiative, 221
hard-line policies toward Iran, 37, 107, 110–13, 115, 117, *120*–21, 193–94, 281–82
hard-line policies toward Syria, 150–52, 156–58, 282
ideological relationships and, 280–81, 281n9
Middle East objectives, 217
nuclear weapons in Iran and, 115
Saudi Arabia and, 244, 247, 250–51
Second Inaugural address, xiii, 31
September 11 terrorist attacks and, xiii
Strategic Dialogue (Saudi Arabia), 251
Syrian-Iranian relations and, 146–47, 150–53
on Turkey, 213, 216, 225
Büyükanit, Yaşar, 171

Camp David Accords, 126n7, 133
Canefe, Nergis, 205
Carter, Jimmy, 150n102
case studies, 64–65
Casey, William, 34
Central Asia, 49
Chamberlain, Neville, 19
Cheney, Dick, 244
Chernyaev, Anatoly, 15
China, 11–13, 23, 113, 209
Christopher, Warren, 149
Chubin, Shahram, 92–94
Churchill, Winston, 21n49
Çiller, Tansu, 173, 185–86, 203, 212
Clarke, Richard, 244, 259n118
clash-of-civilizations thesis, 44–45, 78, 101, 192, 207, 253

Clinton, Bill
Hafez al-Asad and, 149
on European Union, 12
hard-line policies toward Iran, 113–15
on Iran, 110, 184–85
Saudi Arabia and, 243–44
soft-line policies toward Iran, 107–10, 117–21
soft-line policies toward Syria, 149
on Syrian-Iranian alliance, 147–50
on Turkey, 213–14
Clinton, Hillary, 286n21
Cold War, 10, 35–36, 231–32
communism, 230, 237–41
Communist Party, 34
congruence procedure, 62, 64
Copenhagen criteria, 169
Cordesman, Anthony, 251
Coulondre, Robert, 19
Crawford, Timothy W., 41n95

D-8. *See* Developing 8 (D-8)
Dağı, İhsan, 205
David, Steven, 46–47
Davutoğlu, Ahmet, 187–88, 221, 224
*Decision Points* (Bush, George W.), 151
Dekmejian, Richard, 268
Demirel, Süleyman, 167, 173, 186, 203, 212
Democratic Left Party (DLP), 166, 168, 170, 172n27
democratic peace thesis, ix, xiv, xvi, 12, 44
demonstration effects, 13n26
Deng Xiaoping, 13
Developing 8 (D-8), 185, 186n94, 205
Dikici, Hasan, 204
Djilas, Milovan, 30
DLP. *See* Democratic Left Party (DLP)
Dominican Republic, 37

Ecevit, Bülent, 168–69, 183, 186
Eddy, William, 233
Egypt, 14, 55, 126, 133, 185, 221, 223, 240, 284n16
Ehteshami, Anoushiravan, 87, 132
Eisenhower, Dwight, 10, 238
ElBaradei, Mohammad, 95
Emanuel, Rahm, 284
Erbakan, Necmettin, 179, 184–85, 186n94, 195, 197–98, 204–5
Erdoğan, Recep Tayyip
on Egypt, 223
on EU, 207
on Israel, 199, 229
on JDP, 176–78, 178n56
on nuclear weapons in Iran, 188
on reform in Turkey, 220–21
repressive policies, 228–29
on Tunisia, 223
on Turkish-American alliance, 219
EU. *See* European Union (EU)
EU-3 agreement, 95
Europe, 201–9
European Charter for Protection of Human Rights and Basic Liberties, 176
European Union (EU)
Bill Clinton on, 12
Erdoğan on, 207
JDP and, 203, 206–7
Kemalists and, 165, 206, 208–9, 209n183, 228
RPP and, 208
Turkey and, 165, 169–70, 172, 176, 201–9, 225

Fahd of Saudi Arabia, 241, 255
Faisal, Khaled al-, 261
Faisal of Saudi Arabia, 240–41
Fandy, Mamoun, 255
Farhi, Farideh, 101n132
Firouzabadi, Hassan, 97
France, 19, 23, 23n51, 24–26, 26n56, 203
French Army High Command, 13
French Revolution, 30, 39
Fuller, Graham, 51n114, 52
fundamentalism and fundamentalists, 51, 53, 68n4, 155

Gause, Gregory, 125–26, 129n18, 236, 236n11, 263
GCC. *See* Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)
Georgia, 14
Germany
Britain and, 19, 25–26, 26n56
France and, 19, 23, 25–26, 26n56
Italy and, 17–18
Russia and, 23n51
Soviet Union and, 7–8, 10, 13, 19
Gingrich, Newt, 245
GMEI. *See* Greater Middle East Initiative (GMEI)

Golan Heights
Israel and, 132–33, 162
Netanyahu on, 145
Syria and, 24, 129, 131n24, 132–33, 133n31, 138–39, 143, 162
United States and, 148
Gorbachev, Mikhail, 33–35, 37, 86
Gore, Al, 243–44
Grand Mosque, 241n35
Greater Middle East Initiative (GMEI), 221–22
Green Movement, 93n108
Guantanamo Bay, 282
Gül, Abdullah, 166n3, 190–91, 200, 207, 219–20
Guldimann, Tim, 102
Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), 82, 271
Gulf War (1991), 214n201, 254, 257, 267, 267n153

Hadian, Nasser, 114
Hadith, 176
Hafiz, 25
Haghighatjoo, Fatemeh, 93
Hama massacre, 135–36, 154
Hamas, 81
Hamilton, Lee, 160
hard-line policies, 32–43, 41n94, 110–117, *120*–123, 150–153, 156–158, 181n75, 194, 274, 281–82. *See also* hard-line policies *entries under* George W. Bush, Bill Clinton, ideological multipolarity, Iran, Syria, and West
Hawali, Safar al-, 252–54, 256
headscarves, 171, 173, 182
Heymann, Hans, 11
Hinnebusch, Raymond A., 132
Hitler, Adolph, 9–10, 24, 29n63
Hizbollah
Amal and, 141
Hafez al-Asad and, 141n65
Iran and, 79, 81, 102, 114n179
Israel and, 138
reformers' views, 114n179
Syria and, 138, 141–42, 141n65, 145–46, 158
House Concurrent Resolution 275, 246
House Resolution 3057, 246
Huntington, Samuel, 44–45, 78, 192, 253
Hurd, Elizabeth, 51n114
Hussein, Saddam, 54–55, 244, 281n9

IAEA. *See* International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)
ibn Abd-al-Wahhab, Muhammad, 232
ideological bipolarity, 21–25, 27–29, 60
ideological content, 4, 38, 44, 127n12, 130, 191–92, 199, 222–23, 226–27, 276
ideological distances
assessments of others' intentions and, 7–12
described, 5
determining, 57–60
domestic interests and, 12–15
effects on alliances, 16–21, 25–26
ideological polarity and, 25, 42–43
power distributions and, 48–51
reformers and, 59–60
small and large, 48
soft-line policies and, 33n74
threat perceptions and foreign policies and, *16*
ideological moderates, 33n73
ideological multipolarity
alliances and, 22–26, *29*, 276
Bush's (George W.) foreign policies and, 281
described, 21–25, 223
determined, 60–61
hard-line policies and, 41
security threats and opportunities and, 27–29
soft-line policies and, 43, 146–49
Syrian-Iranian alliance and, 128, 131–32, 135, 147, 150
Syrian foreign policies and, 153, 157–58
Turkish foreign policies and, 223, 227
U. S.-Saudi relations and, 238
ideological polarity
described, 6, 21, 60
hard-line and soft-line policies and, 40–41
ideological distances and, 25, 42–43
measuring, 60–61
ideology, definition, 3–4
illiberals, 55–56. *See also* Islamists; secular authoritarianism
ILSA. *See* Iran-Libya Sanctions Act (ILSA)
Incirlik airbase, 220
India, 209
Indonesia, 185
Indyk, Martin, 108–9, 149

International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), 95
International Security Assistance Force, 215
Iran
  Afghanistan and, 99
  Al Qaeda in, 104–5
  Arab-Israeli conflicts and, 78–79
  Balkans and, 49
  Bush's (George W.) hard-line policies toward, 37, 107, 110–13, 115, 117, *120*–21, 193–94, 281–82
  Central Asia and, 49
  China and, 113
  Bill Clinton on, 110, 184–85
  Clinton's hard-line policies toward, 113–15
  Clinton's soft-line policies toward, 107–10, 117–21
  conservatives, 68–70, 76, 83–91, 85n80, 103–6, 143
  domestic preferences, 68–74
  grand bargain proposal, 101–2, 112, 117
  Guardian Council, 75–76, 77n40
  Hamas and, 81
  Hizbollah and, 81
  ideology and foreign policies, 75–76
  Iraq and, 105
  Iraqi civil war and, 115
  Iraq-Iran War (1980), 127, 134, 140
  Islam and, 8–9, 81, 125
  Islamic revolutionaries in, 125
  Islamists in, 275
  isolation, 115n183
  Israel and, 128–32, 134, 138–39, 143–44
  JDP and, 192
  judiciary, 75, 82n72
  Kemalists and, 189
  Lebanon and, 141
  liberalization in, 101, 193, 275
  Middle East foreign policy, 32
  Muslim Brotherhood and, 136
  National Security Council, 75
  nuclear weapons and (*see* nuclear weapons in Iran)
  Obama's soft-line policies toward, 118–19, 279, 282
  Obama's videotaped message to, 118–19
  Palestinians and, 79
  parliament (Majles), 75–76
  Planning and Budget organization, 75
  political factions, 68–74
  political system, 65, 68–69, 75
  president, 75, 77n40
  reformers, 70–74, 70n11, 86–88, 91–103, 117, 275
  Revolution (1979), 9, 28–29, 66, 126, 131–34
  RPP and, 189
  Russia and, 113
  sanctions, 90, 109, 111, 113–14, 119, 188
  Saudi Arabia and, 236n11, 269
  Supreme Leader, 75–76, 77n40
  Syria and, 24–27, 41, 125–46, 160–63
  terrorism and, 81
  TPP and, 185
  Turkey and, 143, 165–66, 181–94, 211
  Turkish-American alliance and, 193
  United States and, 9, 76–78, 80–82, 84–87, 85n80, 160–61
  uranium-enrichment activities, 115 (*see also* nuclear weapons in Iran)
  U. S.-Saudi relations and, 269
  war on terror (United States) and, 98–106, 101n132
  Western hard-line policies toward, 115n183
  WP and, 184–86
  *See also* Islamic Republic of Iran (IRI)
Iranian Revolution (1979), 9, 28–29, 51, 66, 68, 126–28, 131–34, 136, 140, 181–82
Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), 75–76
Iran-Libya Sanctions Act (ILSA), 107
Iraq
  civil war, 115
  insurgents in, 287n23
  Iranians in, 105
  Iraq-Iran War (1980), 127, 134, 140
  Iraq War (2003) (*see* Iraq War (2003))
  military expenditures, 143
  oil, 135
  Syria and, 127–28, 127n12, 135–36, 157–58, 161
Iraq Study Group report (2006), 160
Iraq War (2003)
  as perceived domination of Muslim world, 254n92
  JDP and, 219
  Kemalists and, 173, 216–17
  Kurdistan and, 189
  motivations for, 244
  objective, 39

Iraq War (2003) (*continued*)
Saudi reformers on, 268, 268n158
Syria and, 157–58
Turkey and, 220
Turkish-American alliance and, 214
United States and, 173, 214, 283, 287n23
IRGC. *See* Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC)
IRI. *See* Islamic Republic of Iran (IRI)
Islam
interpretations of, 45
Iran and, 8–9, 81, 125
JDP and, 175, 192
Saudi Arabia and, 240
in Turkey, 171, 174–76, 217
*See also* Islamism; Islamists; Wahhabism
Islamic fundamentalism, 198
Islamic Jihad, 81
Islamic Republic of Iran (IRI), 69, 118, 129, 138, 182, 185, 193–94, 234, 266n152, 279
Islamic United Nations, 205
Islamism
description, 52–53
as illiberal, 56
in Middle East, 51
pan-Islamism, 130–31
political Islamism, 178
Saudi Arabia and, 243
secular authoritarianism and, 54n125, 153
Sharia and, 52
states' laws and institutions and, 52
in Syria, 125, 150, 153–59, 158n137
Islamists
animosity toward United States, 276–79
dissident Islamists, 252–57, 259, 259n118, 267
fears of subversion, 278–79
ideology and Iran, 8–9
in Iran, 275
Islamist parties, 37
in Saudi Arabia, 272, 275
Sunni Islamists, 136
Syria and, 25, 279–80
in Turkey, 275
*See also* Iran, conservatives; Islam; Islamism
Islamo-liberals, 53–54
Israel
Ahmadinejad on, 79
Arab-Israeli conflicts, 78–79, 225n243
Arab-Israeli peace process, 225
Hafez al-Asad and, 129, 130, 143
Egypt and, 133
Erdoğan on, 199, 229
Golan Heights and, 132–33, 162
Hizbollah and, 138
Iran and, 128–31, 134, 138–39, 143–44
Iranian Revolution and, 131
JDP and, 195, 199–201
Kemalists and, 195–98
Khamenei on, 78–79
Khatami on, 79–80
Lebanon invasion (1982), 137–40
MP and, 195
Muslims and, 55–56
Palestinian policies, 225n243
Syria and, 128–30, 143
Syrian-Iranian alliance and, 150
TPP and, 195
Turkey and, 161, 194–201
WP and, 195–200
Israeli-Palestinian conflict, 131n24, 200–201
Italy, 17–18

Jackson-Vanik Amendment, 9
Jannati, Ahmad, 85
JDP. *See* Justice and Development Party (JDP)
Jerusalem Day, 134
Jerusalem Memorial Night, 186
Johnson, Lyndon, 240–41
Jones, Toby, 245
Jordan, 271
*Jumhuri-ye Islami* (newspaper), 89, 97
Justice and Development Party (JDP)
Alliance of Civilizations and, 177, 178n56, 224
Arab Spring and, 223
ascension to power, 190
elections (2002), 173, 193, 198, 217
Erdoğan on, 176–78, 178n56
EU and, 203, 206–7
Gül and, 166n3
ideologies of, 174, 177, 189–90, 193, 198–99, 201, 207–8, 223–24, 226–27
Iran and, 192
Iraq War (2003) and, 219
Islam and, 175, 192
Israel and, 195, 199–201
Israel's Palestinian policies and, 225n243

Muslim-majority countries and, 191–92, 198, 223–24, 227, 276
secularism and, 175
security cooperation and, 275
Syria and, 221
Turkish-American alliance and, 214
Turkish politics and, 166
United States and, 219–21, 225, 227

Kadivar, Mohsen, 86
Karabaschi, Gholam Hussein, 83
*Karine A* (ship), 104–5, 105n146
Kasaba, Reşat, 205
Kattouf, Theodore, 152
KAUST. *See* King Abdullah University of Science and Technology (KAUST)
Keitel, Wilhelm, 10
Kemalists
EU and, 165, 206, 208–9, 209n183, 228
Eurasianists, 209
Europe and, 202–3
fears of ideological subversion, 182–84, 187
ideologies of, 171, 208
Iran and, 189
Iraq War (2003) and, 173, 216–17
on Islamic fundamentalism, 198
Islam in Turkey and, 171
Israel and, 195–98
nationalism and, 180, 203
secularism and, 182, 203
Turkish-American alliance and, 214, 218n218
Turkish politics and, 166
United States and, 217–18, 218n218, 228, 275
on war on terror, 215–16
West and, 218–19, 228
Kennedy, John F., 37
Kerr, Malcolm, 240
Kerry, John, 246
Khaddam, Abd al-Halim, 131
Khalidi, Rashid, 240
Khalilzad, Zalmay, 111
Khamenei, Ali
Ahmadinejad and, 74, 74n30, 97n121
Axis of Evil speech and, 67
grand bargain proposal and, 102
on Israel, 78–79
on nuclear weapons in Iran, 89, 97
on Obama's videotaped message, 118–19
on United States, 84–86, 110, 278–79
on West, 70, 85–86
Kharrazi, Sadegh, 102
Khatami, Mohammad
Ahmadinejad and, 76n35
Albright on, 108–9
on Arab-Israeli conflicts, 78
on Axis of Evil speech, 116
on conservative critics, 74
EU-3 agreement, 95
foreign policy of, 78
as Iranian reformer, 71n12, 72
on Iranian reformers, 71
on Israel, 79–80
judiciary and, 82n72
9/11 and, 98
on nuclear weapons in Iran, 92–93, 96–97
presidency, 76–77, 77n40, 81–82, 108
presidential powers bill, 100
on terrorism, 80
on United States, 74, 78, 82–83
on West, 73, 85
Khatami, Mohammad Reza, 115
Khobar Towers, 109
Khomeini, Ruhollah Musavi, 28n61, 68–69, 132, 134, 182, 186
Kilinç, Tuncer, 218
King Abdullah University of Science and Technology (KAUST), 262
Konya rally, 195
Kosaner, Isik, 209
Kuneralp, Zeki, 196n131
Kurdish peoples, 174, 217, 229
Kurdistan, 174, 177, 189, 217
Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), 143, 182–83, 218n218
Kyl, Jon, 246
Kyrgyzstan, 14

Lacroix, Stéphane, 268
laicism and laicists, 170–71
Larijani, Ali Ardashir, 88–89
Lebanon
elections (2009), 161
ideological order in, 141–42
Iran and, 139, 141–42
Israel's invasion of (1982), 137–40
Rouhani on, 139
Shias and, 138
Syria and, 133, 137–39, 141–42, 145–46, 157–58

Lebanon (*continued*)
U. S. troops in, 137–38, 144
Lebanon-Syria Treaty of Brotherhood, Cooperation, and Coordination, 148
Lenin, Vladimir, 7, 50
Leverett, Flynt, 112
liberalism
classical liberalism, 54
democracy and, 39
Gorbachev and, 34–35
in Middle East, 51, 51n114, 54, 221–22, 227, 282, 284–87
United States and, 9
Western, 69, 73n23
Libya, 185
Lieberman, Joe, 246
Likud party, 145
Lippman, Thomas, 237
Litvinov, Maxim, 10, 40
longitudinal analysis, 62–64
Lukashenka, Alyaksandar, 15
Lyons, Jonathan, 198

Malaysia, 185
Mao Zedong, 23
Matlock, Jack, 10
McConnell, Mitch, 246
Mearsheimer, John, 47
MEK. *See* Mujahedin-e-Khalq (MEK)
Mexico, 11n19
Middle East
Bush, George W. and, 217
Islamism in, 51
Islamist parties in, 37
liberalism in, 51, 51n114, 54, 221–22, 227, 282, 284–87
Nasserism in, 240
in 1980s, 124
secular authoritarianism in, 51
subversion fears in, 14
Turkey's foreign policy in, 32
United States' foreign policy in, 32, 37, 51–56, 218–19, 276–87, 284n16
moderates, description, 58
Mohajerani, Ataollah, 71n12, 83
Mohtashemi, Ali Akbar, 142
Morocco, 271
Mosaddeq, Mohammad, 110
Moslem, Mehdi, 72–73
Motherland Party (MP)
Europe and, 203
Israel and, 195
liberalizing reforms and, 168
secularism and, 173–74, 181–82
Turkish politics and, 166
Mousavi, Mir Hussein, 285
Movement for Islamic Reform in Arabia, 252
Mozainy, Hamza al-, 268
MP. *See* Motherland Party (MP)
Mubarak, Hosni, xiii, 221, 271
Mujahedin-e-Khalq (MEK), 105, 109
Murawiec, Laurent, 245
Muslim Brotherhood (Syria), 125–26, 135–37, 153–55
Muslim Common Market, 185
Muslim liberals and illiberals, 55–56

Nabavi, Behzad, 114n179
NAP. *See* Nationalist Action Party (NAP)
Nasser, Gamal Abdul, 240
Nasserism, 230, 240
Nateq-Nuri, Ali Akbar, 69, 73n23, 84–85
National Intelligence Estimate (2007), 95, 95n114
nationalism, 54n125, 171, 179–80, 203
Nationalist Action Party (NAP), 166, 172, 179–80, 204–6, 209
National Security Council (NSC) (Turkey), 169, 183
National Security Decision Directive (NSDD)-75, 31
National Security Policy Document, 189
Nayef bin Abdul Aziz, 259n118
Nazi-Soviet Pact (1939), 24
neoconservatives, 39, 244
neo-Ottomanism, 192
neorealist theories, 47–48. *See also* realism and realists
Netanyahu, Benjamin, 145–46, 162
New Thinkers, 14–15, 33, 86
Nigeria, 185
9/11. *See* September 11 terrorist attacks
9/11 Commission report, 245–46
Nixon, Richard, 9
Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), 95
NSC. *See* National Security Council (NSC) (Turkey)
NSDD-75. *See* National Security Decision Directive (NSDD)-75
nuclear weapons in China, 11

nuclear weapons in Iran
acquisition of, 87
Ahmadinejad on, 89
during George W. Bush presidency, 112, 115, 117
conservatives' views, 88–91, 96
domestic politics and, 87–88, 88n90
Erdoğan on, 188
Green Movement and, 93n108
Khamenei on, 89, 97
Khatami on, 92–93, 96–97
National Intelligence Estimate (2007) and, 95, 95n114
reformers' views, 91–98, 92n104
sanctions for, 188
threat perceptions and, 88
Turkey and, 187
United States and, 89–90
Nuqaydan, Mansur al-, 266
Nuri, Abdallah, 71n12, 83

Oakley, Robert, 259n118
Obama, Barack
Abdullah and, 271
Ahmadinejad and, 122, 285
on Arab Spring, xiii–xiv, 285–86
foreign policy of, xiii–xiv, 282, 284–85
Middle East liberalism and, 285
on Saudi Arabia, 270–71
soft-line policies toward Iran, 118–19, 279, 282
soft-line policies toward Syria, 159–61, 282
on Turkey, 225
videotaped message to Iran, 118–19
OECD. *See* Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)
offshore balancers, 284
Oğuzlu, Tarik, 224
OIC. *See* Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC)
oil, 234–35, 244
Olmert, Yosef, 141
Olson, Robert, 187, 198
Önis, Ziya, 172
omnibalancing, 46–47
Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), 200
Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), 191, 225
Owen, John, 6
Öymen, Onur, 185–86
Özal, Turgut, 166–67, 174, 203, 211–12
Özbudun, Ergun, 169
Özener, Barlas, 196
Özkeçeci-Taner, Binnur, 185
Özkök, Hilmi, 189, 216

Pakistan, 185
Palestine and Palestinians, 56, 78–81, 101–02, 130, 131n24, 134, 143–44, 199, 201, 225n243, 282. *See also* Israeli-Palestinian conflict
pan-Arabism, 130, 131n24, 143n74
pan-Islamism, 130
Paris Agreement, 95–97
passive secularism, 173, 175
Peres, Shimon, 145, 199–200
Perinçek, Mehmet, 209, 217–18
Perle, Richard, 245
Pitt, William, 30
PKK. *See* Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK)
Pollack, Kenneth, 108
Powell, Colin, 34–35, 216
power, 6, 32, 39, 48–51, 61
process tracing, 62–64

Qaddafi, Muammar, xiii
Qasim, Abd al-Aziz al-, 265–66

Rabinovich, Itamar, 143
Rafsanjani, Ali Akbar Hashemi, 71n12
Raja'i, Mohammad Ali, 136
Raphaeli, Nimrod, 260–61
Rasheed, Madawi al-, 257
Rasheed, Mohammad al-, 261
Reagan, Ronald, 10, 35, 35n83, 238, 241
realism and realists, 20, 47, 270, 283–84
foreign policies and, 8–10, 23n53
predictions of, 16–17, 20, 27, 47–48
problems with, xvi, 8–10, 20, 22, 106, 121, 124, 128, 132–34, 140, 187, 241, 274–80
relation to ideological arguments, 27, 42, 48–51, 58, 148, 235–38, 251–52, 269–70, 283–84
support for, 127–28, 230, 235–38, 269
theory of, xiv, 6
*See also* neorealist theories
reformers, 53, 57–60

regime exportation, 8, 30–38, 67n3, 106, 134, 139, 182–83, 210–14, 240, 274–75, 285–87
Rehn, Olli, 208n181
religious democracy, 71
religious rule, 190
Republican Peoples Party (RPP)
EU and, 208
ideologies of, 172–73, 180
illiberalism of, 172–73
Iran and, 189
liberalizing goals, 168
Turkey's secularism and, 170
Turkish-American alliance and, 214
Turkish politics and, 166
research methods, 62–64
Rezai, Mohsen, 97
Rhodes, Benjamin J., 285
Rice, Condoleezza, 105, 248, 280
Robins, Philip, 165, 196, 211, 220
Roosevelt, Franklin, 21n49
Rostow, Walt, 31
Rouhani, Hojjatoleslam Fakhr, 139
Rowhani, Hassan, 88n90
RPP. *See* Republican Peoples Party (RPP)
Rumsfeld, Donald, 151, 244
Rushdie, Salmon, 82–83
Russia
Belarus and, 15, 18
Britain and, 21n49
civil war (1918–21), 49
France and, 19
Germany and, 23n51
Iran and, 113
Turkey and, 209
United States and, 21n49
Rutherford, Bruce, 51n113, 54

Safavi, Yahya Rahim, 82–83, 96, 115
Sahwa sheikhs, 252, 254–55, 257
Salimi, Mohammed, 89
Salman bin Abdul Aziz, 259
SALSRA. *See* Syria Accountability and Lebanese Sovereignty Restoration Act (SALSRA)
Samarah, Mojtaba Hashemi, 115
Saudi Arabia
Al Qaeda and, 242, 258, 259n118
Al Saud dynasty, 232–33
Bahrain alliance (2011), 15
Bahrain and, 271
Bush, George W. and, 244, 247, 250–51
Bill Clinton and, 243–44
Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, 263–64
dissident Islamists in, 252–59, 267
domestic politics, 237
education system, 262
Egypt and, 240
Iran and, 236n11, 269
Islam and Islamism and, 240, 243
Islamists in, 272, 275
Jordan and, 271
Khobar Towers bombing, 109
liberalizing reforms and, 260–73, 275, 283
Middle East foreign policy, 32
Morocco and, 271
National Dialogues, 262–63
Obama on, 270–71
pro-Islamist activities, 241, 241n35, 243
reforms, 267–68
regime of, 232–33, 233n7
religious freedom in, 263
Shias in, 263, 266n152
Soviet Union and, 242
Taif Accord, 142
terrorist attacks (2003), 231, 249, 251–52, 254, 257
terrorist financing and, 251, 251n75
ulema and, 236–37
United States and (*see* U. S.-Saudi relations)
U. S. troops in, 255
Wahhabi clerics in, 269
West and, 265–67, 266n152
women in, 263–64, 267
Saud of Saudi Arabia, 240
Schumer, Charles, 246
Schwarzkopf, Norman, 233–34, 234n9
Seale, Patrick, 125, 129
secular authoritarianism, 51, 51n114, 54–55, 54n125, 56, 153, 279
secularism, 53, 170–75, 181–82, 203, 216–17. *See also* passive secularism
September 11 terrorist attacks
Bush, George W. and, xiii
Iranian conservatives on, 103–4
Iranian reformers on, 98
Jones on, 245
Khatami and, 98

Sahwa sheikhs and, 257
Saudi reforms and, 267–68
Turkey and, 215
U. S.-Saudi relations and, 244–48
*See also* 9/11 Commission report
Sezer, Ahmet, 216
Shahab-3 missile, 187
Shahroudi, Mahmood Hashemi, 66–67, 82, 223
Sharia, 52, 178, 186
Sheikh, Abdul-Aziz al-, 232
Shelby, Richard, 246
Shias
empowering, 105
Lebanese, 138
in Saudi Arabia, 263, 266n152
Sunnis and, 59, 136
Shiism, 129n18
Shultz, George, 34
Sick, Gary, 9, 81
Sieff, Martin, 246–47
Sinai Peninsula, 133
Sincan Affair, 186
Sino-Soviet alliance (1950s), 11
Six-Day War, 129
Social Democratic Populist Party, 183
soft-line policies, 32–35, 33n73–74, 38–45, 107–10, 117–121, 125, 146–50, 159, 194, 225, 227, 274, 282. *See also* soft-line policies *entries under* Bill Clinton, ideological distances, ideological multipolarity, ideological polarity, Iran, Barack Obama, and Syria
Soroush, Abdol Karim, 71n12, 266n152
Soviet Union
Britain and, 24–26, 26n56
China and, 11, 23
Cold War and, 36
Constitution, 34
France and, 24–26, 26n56
Germany and, 7–8, 10, 13, 19
New Thinkers, 14–15
Reagan on, 35n83
Saudi Arabia and, 242
Turkey and, 164
United States and, 28n61, 31, 33–35
U. S.-Saudi relations and, 237–42
Spain, 11n19
"Spread of Islamism" (NSC), 183
Stalin, Josef, 11–12, 24, 30
Sudan, 185
Sunni Islamists, 135
Sunnis, 59, 136
Surkov, Vladislav, 14
Sykes-Picot Agreement, 131n24
Syria
Al Qaeda and, 154
anti-Zionism and, 129, 143n74
Ba'thist regime, 51, 125–26, 127n12, 149, 279
Bush's (George H. W.) soft-line policies toward, 148
Bush's (George W.) hard-line policies toward, 150, 156–58, 282
Clinton's soft-line policies toward, 149
fundamentalists and, 155
Golan Heights and, 24, 129, 131n24, 132–33, 133n31, 138–39, 143, 162
Hizbollah and, 138, 141n65, 142, 145–46, 158
Iran and, 24–27, 41, 125–27, 127n12, 135–37, 145, 160–61
Iranian Revolution and, 126–28, 131–34, 136, 140
Iraq and, 127–28, 127n12, 135–36, 157–58, 161
Islamism in, 125, 150, 153–59, 158n137
Islamists and, 25, 279–80
Israel and, 128–30, 143
JDP and, 221
Kurdistan Workers' Party and, 143
Lebanon and, 133, 138, 141–42, 145–46, 157–58
Lebanon-Syria Treaty of Brotherhood, Cooperation, and Coordination, 148
Obama's soft-line policies toward, 160–162, 282
protests in, 162–63, 221, 225n243
sanctions against, 152, 161
secularism of, 150
Syrian-Iranian alliance (*see* Syrian-Iranian alliance)
Turkey and, 143, 161, 223
United States and, 25, 41, 147–53, 155–58, 160–63, 283
Syria Accountability and Lebanese Sovereignty Restoration Act (SALSRA), 152
Syrian-Iranian alliance
Bush, George W. and, 146–47, 150–53
Bill Clinton on, 147, 149
ideological differences and, 140–46

Syrian-Iranian alliance (*continued*)
Israel and, 128–34, 143–46, 149
in 1990s, 143
origins, 127–40
realist calculations in, 127–28, 276
security cooperation and, 41, 127–28, 134–38, 146, 275
in 2000s, 41
United States and, 26, 125, 146–47, 149–50
weakening of, 140–46
Syrianism, 143n74

Taif Accord, 142
Takeyh, Ray, 82, 85, 91–92
*takfir*, 258
Talal bin Abdel Aziz, 258n115
Taliban Afghanistan, 99, 215
Taşpinar, Ömer, 171, 217
terrorism, 80–81
theo-monarchy, 233n7
threat
foreign policies and, *16*
high power threats, 50
ideological distances and, *16*
perceptions of, *16*, 47, 49–50, 61–62, 88
security policies and, 61–62
*See also* balance-of-threat
threshold effects, 51, 124, 149, 158, 234
Tiananmen Square, 13
TIKA. *See* Turkish International Cooperation and Development Agency (TIKA)
TPP. *See* True Path Party (TPP)
Treaty of Sèvres, 205n168
True Path Party (TPP)
domestic objectives, 167–68
Europe and, 203
Iran and, 185
Israel and, 195
secularism and, 173
Social Democratic Populist Party and, 183
Turkish politics and, 166
Tunisia, 223
Turkey
Afghanistan and, 215–16
Bush, George H. W. on, 213
Bush, George W. on, 213, 216, 225
China and, 209
Bill Clinton on, 213–14
conservatives, 166
Constitution, 169, 176, 176n49
coups in, 166n3, 169–70
democracy and, 179, 210–14
Democracy Assistance Dialogue, 222
Eastern identity, 224
elections (2011), 228
EU and, 165, 169–70, 172, 176, 201–9, 225
Eurasianists, 209, 218
European relations, 201–9
Huntington on, 45
ideological beliefs in, 166–80
ideological distances in, 226
as illiberal democracy, 229
India and, 209
international relations, 165
Iran and, 143, 165–66, 181–94, 211
Iraq War (2003) and, 220
Islam in, 171, 174–76, 217
Islamists in, 275
Israel and, 161, 194–201
Kurdish peoples and, 174, 217, 229
Kurdistan Workers' Party and, 143, 182–83, 195, 199, 214, 218n218
laicists in, 170–71
liberalizing reforms and, 168–69, 176, 229, 275
Middle East foreign policy of, 32
military, 169–70
nationalism in, 179–80
NATO admission, 164
9/11 and, 215
nuclear weapons in Iran and, 187
Obama on, 225
parties in, 166–80
political Islamism in, 178
political system, 65
Powell on, 216
reforms in, 220–22
repressive policies in, 228–29
Russia and, 209
secularism and, 170–71, 173–75, 216–17
Sharia in, 186
Soviet Union and, 164
Syria and, 143, 161, 223
Turkish Constitutional Court, 171
Turkishness and, 171–72
Turkish Penal Code Article 301, 172
United States and (*see* Turkish-American alliance)

Turki al-Faisal, 258n115, 259, 259n118, 260–61, 271
Turkish-American alliance
described, 164
Erdoğan on, 219
ideology and, 210, 227–28
Iran and, 193–94
Iraq War (2003) and, 214
JDP and, 214
Kemalists and, 214, 218n218
liberalization in Turkey and, 229
in 1900s, 213–14, 214n201
RPP and, 214
in 2000s, 214–25
Turkish Industry and Business Association (TUSIAD), 229
Turkish International Cooperation and Development Agency (TIKA), 221

Ukraine, 14
Ulam, Adam, 49
ulema, 236–37, 256
UN Charter of Human Rights, 176
United Arab Emirates, 145
United States
Afghanistan war and, 99
China and, 13, 23
Dominican Republic and, 37
interests in Iraq with Syria, 161
Iran and, 9, 76–78, 80–82, 84–87, 85n80, 160–61
Iranian reformers on, 74, 275
Iraq War (2003) and, 173, 214, 283, 287n23
Islamists animosity toward, 276–79
JDP and, 219–21, 225, 227
Kemalists and, 217–18, 218n218, 228, 275
Khamenei on, 84–86, 110, 278–79
Khatami on, 74, 78, 82–83
liberalism and, 9
Mexico and, 11n19
Middle East foreign policy, 32, 37, 51–56, 218–19, 276–87, 284n16
Middle East liberalism and, 285–87
Muslim illiberals and, 55
nuclear weapons in Iran and, 89–90
oil and, 235, 244
rendition program, 282
Russia and, 21n49
Saudi Arabia and (*see* U. S.-Saudi relations)
secularism and, 175
Soviet Union and, 28n61, 31, 33–35
Spain and, 11n19
Syria and, 25, 41, 146–58, 162–63, 283
Syrian-Iranian alliance and, 26, 125, 146–47, 150–53
troops in Lebanon, 137–38
troops in Saudi Arabia, 255
Turkey and (*see* Turkish-American alliance)
*See also* war on terror (United States)
U. S.-Saudi relations
Arab Spring and, 270–71
during Cold War, 231–42
after Cold War, 242–49, 269
history, 229
ideologies affect on, 270
Iran and, 269
liberalization in Saudi Arabia and, 272–73
9/11 and, 244–48
oil and, 234–35, 244
realism and, 270
realist calculations in, 276
reformers support for United States, 268–69
Saudi regime and, 237–38
security cooperation and, 275
Soviet Union and, 237–42
after 2003, 249–59
2003 terrorist attacks and, 251–52
U. S. troops in Saudi Arabia, 255
Wahhabi clerics and, 234

*velayat-e faqih* (doctrine), 69, 72
Velayati, Ali Akbar, 132, 139, 142, 144

Wahhabism, 153, 232–33, 236–37, 241, 246, 258n115, 265
Walt, Stephen, 16, 18, 28, 46
Waltz, Kenneth, 27, 47
war on terror (United States)
Al Qaeda and, 215
Iran and, 98–106, 101n132
Iranian conservatives' views, 103–6
Iranian reformers' views, 98–103
Kemalists on, 215–16
Wars of Religion (Europe), 39
wedge strategies, 28–29, 41–43, 41n95, 287. *See also* United States, Syrian-Iranian alliance and

Weinberger, Caspar, 34
Welfare Party (WP)
  ascension, 197
  Europe and, 204–5
  ideologies of, 178–79
  Iran and, 184–86
  Israel and, 195–200
  ouster of, 186–87
  Turkey's secularism and, 170
  Turkish politics and, 166
  weakness, 198
West
  Ahmadinejad on, 97n121
  hard-line policies toward Iran, 115n183
  Kemalists and, 218–19, 228
  Khamenei on, 71, 85–86
  Khatami on, 73, 85
  liberalism and, 69, 73n23
  Saudi Arabia and, 265–67, 266n152
Wolfowitz, Paul, 244
women, in Saudi Arabia, 263–64, 267
World Economic Forum (2009), 199
World War I, 39
World War II, 9–10, 39
WP. *See* Welfare Party (WP)

Yavuz, M. Hakan, 174, 178–79
Yazdi, Mesbah, 69, 69n8, 74, 190
Yazici, Serap, 169
Yilmaz, Mesut, 186n94
Yunesi, Ali, 104

Zisser, Eyal, 125, 155